

Exclusive pattern... Gorgeous new season wide-leg trousers

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Ruth Langsford

My superpower?
It would be
to talk dog!

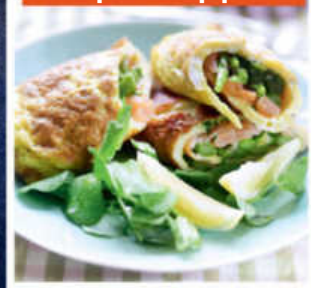
FOOD for sharing



Sweet
somethings



Simple suppers



ANIMAL MAGIC!

Pets who inspired a business



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ANTI-WRINKLE

What would your superpower be?

This question has been bouncing around the Prima office for a while now, with

some dreaming of flying, others of having the power to be invisible or, my personal favourite, being able to teleport anywhere in the world in an instant (just think how wonderful it would be to find yourself lying on a Caribbean beach by lunchtime!). So we couldn't resist asking our lovely cover

star Ruth Langsford the same question on our shoot... and I love her answer! She would like to be able to strike up a conversation with her beloved dog, Maggie.

Now, there is an old adage about never doing photo shoots with children or animals, but I can honestly say our day with Maggie (and Ruth!) was an absolute joy from start to finish. Maggie really is a great advert for having a pet. She was not only pretty to look at but very well behaved, and her tail wagged all day long.

There's a little bit of an animal theme running through this issue... It kind of felt right, what with

it being spring and Easter time. I'm sure you'll enjoy the stories of readers who have come up with fantastic new businesses based on their love of animals. Sue takes photographs of horses with their owners, Abi has established a cat hotel, and Lizzie has learned how to do physiotherapy massage on dogs. Their stories and creativity are so inspiring.

Inspiring, too, is our interview with Jane Howorth, who devotes her life to rescuing battery hens. Deservedly, she has just been awarded an MBE – having given half a million chickens a second chance of life! She calls them her Bat Girls! I'm sure they'll be looking forward to a happy Easter – and I hope you have one, too.

Gaby

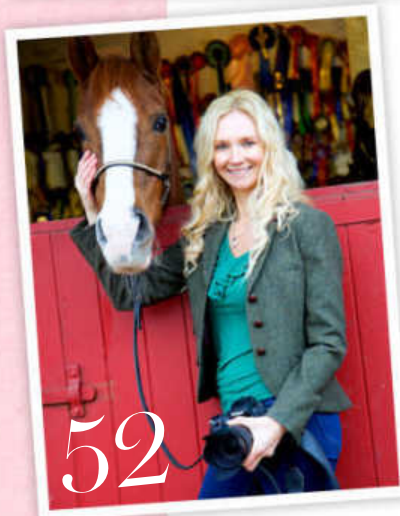
GABY HUDDART, EDITOR

THE NEW TRENDS... REVEALED!

Hurrah, it's time to put away the winter woollies and heavy coats and get dressed for spring. And help is at hand with our round up of the new trends – our fashion ed Amanda tells us which are this season's VIPs (Very Important Pieces). Don't go shopping without it!



New footwear to fall in love with on page 28



116

Don't miss the May issue, **OUT 7 APRIL**

16

We have oodles of sweet inspiration for you!



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NEW PEUGEOT 208

MOTION & EMOTION



PEUGEOT

April 2016



116



60

28



71



94



16

FASHION INSPIRATION

- 16 **On the cover** **Your new season**
VIPs Spring has arrived, so pack away your winter warmers and enjoy these on-trend pieces
- 28 **Ooooh, new shoes!** Put your best foot forward with these fancy flats and brightly coloured heels
- 30 **On the cover** **Jean therapy** Find the perfect fit with our expert guide
- 37 **Break out of your black bag rut!** Bags of fun – and great value!
- 39 **Buy it, wear it, love it!**
All that's new in fashion

INSPIRING READS

- 12 **On the cover** **'My superpower? It would be to talk Dog'** TV presenter Ruth Langford on how her family life has been enhanced since finding woman's best friend
- 40 **'We rediscovered our childhood passions'** Four readers looked to their youth to find fun as an adult

- 46 **'I never get tired of looking at a happy hen!'** One woman on how she helps chickens go free-range
- 49 **Uh-oh... it's a man plan!**
There's nothing like a project to highlight the differences between the sexes, says Fiona Gibson
- 50 **It's good to be moody!**
Modern life getting you down? Here's how to take control
- 52 **On the cover** **'Our businesses are animal magic!'** Three women reveal how they turned their love of pets into their professions
- 58 **'I found the key to my little girl's world'** The story of a mum who helped her autistic daughter defy expectations
- 146 **'Believe in yourself – you never know what could happen!'**
We talk to last year's Flirty Fiction winner about her debut novel
- 162 **All because the lady loves Milk Tray...** Actress and Prima columnist Caroline Quentin says it's the time of year to throw restraint out and indulge!

BEAUTIFUL YOU

- 60 **Coming up roses** Fab fragrances
- 62 **On the cover** **Haircuts to transform... from dull to divine!** Four readers model their gorgeous new looks
- 68 **Whip up a beauty treat!** Kazia Pelka's home-made cosmetic recipes
- 71 **Try it, use it, love it!**
The latest beauty buys and news

YOUR HEALTH

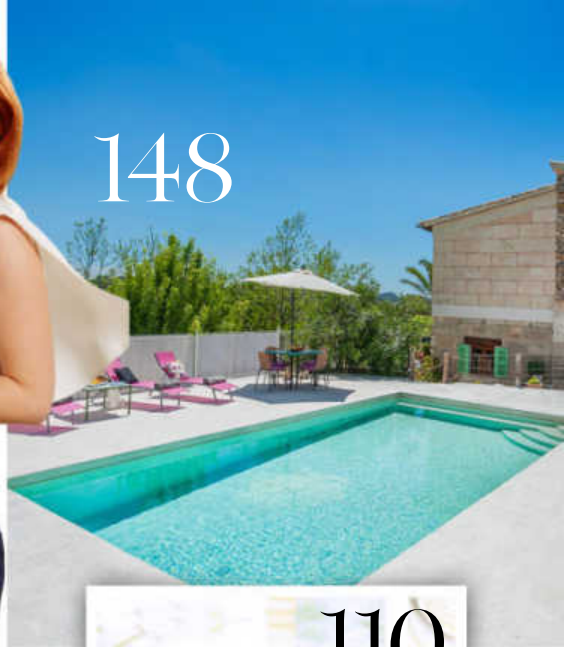
- 73 **On the cover** **Younger, fitter, leaner...** Wellbeing expert Rick Hay's anti-ageing food and fitness plan, loved by actress Sarah Parish
- 79 **When to worry & when not to**
Dr Sarah Brewer on the symptoms you should tell your doctor about
- 82 **Why are we all becoming so allergic?** Hay fever isn't the only thing making us snuffle – here's an insight into the latest research
- 87 **Arthritis – an 'old age' condition that can strike at any time** Facts, signs and how to ease the pain ➔



132

10

148



37

52

128



110

GREAT ADVICE

- 88 **'Can I love a child who isn't my own?'** Writer Rosalind Powell shares her journey of becoming an adoptive parent to a young boy
- 90 **'It's never too late to make a million... I know, I did!'**
Dragons' Den star Sarah Willingham's guide to success
- 92 **Sort your tech niggles** Advice on sorting emails, maximising battery life and trading in phones
- 147 **Take 5... Top-notch B&Bs**
Special places to stay in the UK
- 148 **Let's go self-catering!** Spend a week (or two) in one of these luxurious – but affordable – villas

HOME STYLE

- 94 **On the cover Spring to life** Bring the new season indoors with these pastel colours and floral accessories
- 102 **How to create calm** Sarah Beeny shares her tips on how to keep your home stylish and serene

- 104 **Best of both worlds** A couple turn a railway cottage in North Yorkshire into a modern classic
- 108 **Girl about the house** Advice on how to become a domestic goddess

COOKERY

- 110 **On the cover Relaxed, springtime feast** Delicious recipes – including a simple pot roast and dishes you prepare in advance – to wow family and friends over long weekends
- 116 **On the cover Sweet inspiration**
Egg-cellent teatime treats!
- 123 **On the cover Dinners in a dash**
Tasty meals ready in 30 minutes
- 125 **Cook it, eat it, love it!** The latest foodie must-buys and know-how

MAKE IT

- 128 **On the cover This season's wide-leg trousers** This month's exclusive Prima pattern
- 130 **Lisa Comfort customises it!**
Give a top a Parisian-style update

- 132 **On the cover Bunny side up** Easter makes to brighten up your home
- 137 **Statement knits for spring**
Choose from a stylish striped sweater or two-tone jacket
- 141 **Sew it, make it, love it!** Craft fairs and creative inspiration

EVERY MONTH

- 10 **Prima loves** Seasonal treats
- 142 **Your time off & time out** Our guide to this month's entertainment
- 144 **Curl up with a good book**
Six cracking must-reads to enjoy
- 160 **Where to buy** Stockist details
- 161 **Stars** What's in store for April

TREATS FOR YOU

- 39 **On the cover WIN a fashion shopping spree at Next**
- 71 **On the cover Get 20% off Balance Me skincare**
- 155 **Win! Win! Win!** Great goodies
- 157 **Puzzles** Win cash prizes!



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top model

Good models have
the look...

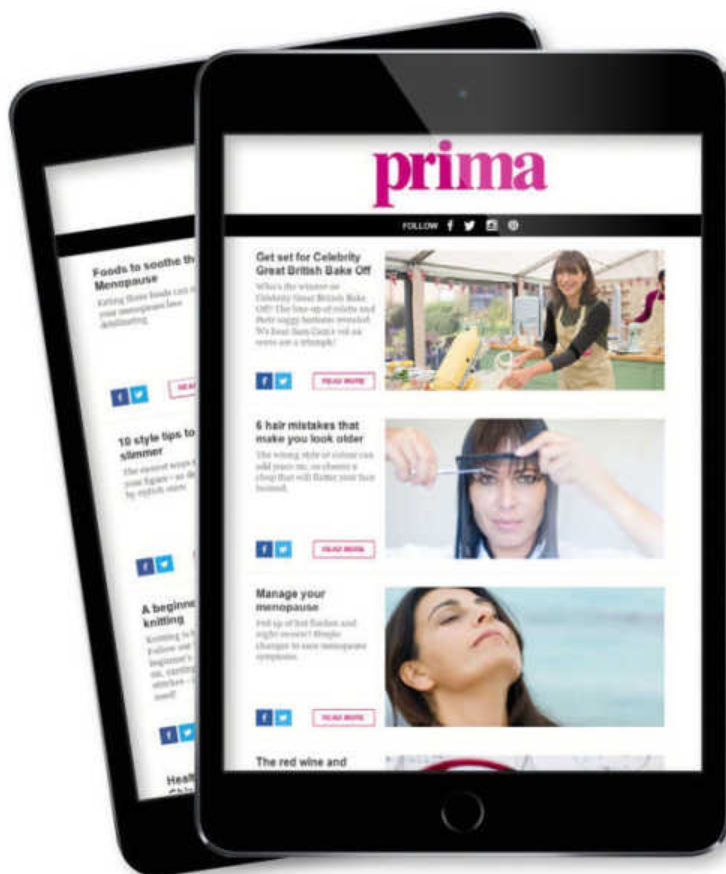




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use their head...



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USE THEIR
HEAD
& SHOULDERS**

PARTY FAVOURS

Wow guests with these Pink Fizz Cocktail and Gin & Tonic handbag treats filled with **bath salts** and **lip balm**, £10 each, Notonthehighstreet.com



FLOWER POWER

Prima's latest **bouquet** with Flying Flowers bursts with roses, germini, irises and more! Spring Celebration, in three sizes, from £21.99, Flying Flowers

HIGH SOCIETY

The latest range of Cath Kidston china is divine! Highgate Rose dessert **plate**, £6; **cup & saucer**, £16, all Cath Kidston



ADULTS-ONLY EGG!

Treat yourself to this lemon-flavoured chocolate egg filled with gin-infused truffles. London Gin Truffle **Easter Egg**, £16 for 170g, Prestat



Prima loves

Hello, springtime! Celebrate the new season with these lovely little treats. Go on, you know you want to!

TWELFTH BITE

Light and delicious, these eggs will disappear in no time! 12 Milk Chocolate **Praline Eggs**, £5 for 175g, Waitrose



CIRCLE OF LIFE

This Easter **wreath** is pretty enough to leave hanging until summer! Gisela Graham Pastel Egg Wreath, £24, Amazon



NECKS, PLEASE!

These dazzling, vintage-style beauties will complement your spring wardrobe. Herschel Vintage Fire Opal **necklaces**, £18.50 each, Eclectic Eccentricity

DRINK UP

Not just for kids, these fun bottles will add a quirky touch to alfresco get-togethers. Bunny **milk bottles**, £5 each, Sainsbury's





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That's why Britain's
Next Top Models use
their Head & Shoulders
for up to 100% flake
free gorgeous hair



**MODELS
USE THEIR
HEAD
& SHOULDERS**

‘MY SUPERPOWER? It would be to *talk Dog*’

TV presenter Ruth Langsford was absolutely adamant that she, husband Eamonn and son Jack weren't getting a dog. And then she met Maggie...

Ruth, 55, lives in Surrey with her husband, TV presenter Eamonn Holmes, their 14-year-old son Jack, and their rescue dog, Maggie.

Dog days

I never even thought about having a dog. I didn't grow up with one as my dad was in the army, so we travelled a lot. Eamonn didn't grow up with pets either, because they didn't have the time or money and I very much doubt his mother had the inclination to look after something else, what with five boys!

But from the age of eight, Jack always asked for a dog. He would say, 'Mummy, please, please, please can we get a dog?' I always had lots of reasons why we couldn't: 'We both work'; 'I'm not a doggy person!'; 'What if we go away?'; 'It will be me doing all of the walking!' Sometimes, I'd say, 'maybe next year', but I had absolutely no intention of getting one – I was just deflecting in the hope that he would stop asking.

Things changed when Eamonn was invited to a Dogs Trust event. I said, 'Don't you dare come home with a dog!' He said, 'Of course I won't!' Instead, he came home with 10 seconds of footage of a little dog in a kennel looking up with

her beautiful black eyes and wagging tail. Her name was Magdalene. Jack took one look at her and said, 'Please Mum, can we have her?'

A few weeks later, Eamonn took us to the Dogs Trust HQ in London, 'just to look around'. He called ahead and asked if that little black dog was still there, but she'd been re-homed. I admit, I was already thinking, 'Well we don't want a big dog or an old dog'. But as we walked around, none of the dogs were quite right and I remember thinking, 'Phew, got out of that one!'

But while we were there, the staff mentioned that Magdalene was back. The woman who'd taken her had got a job, so couldn't keep her. Five minutes later, Magdalene came back from a walk. Jack crouched down, she gently licked his knees and he said, 'Hello Maggie'. I sat and watched him play with her for hours. It was like watching them fall in love. But I still didn't relent! I didn't want to make a rash decision; I was nervous about how to cope if the dog was badly behaved.

The next morning at 6am, Jack came into our bedroom in tears. He said, 'Please can we go and get Maggie – what if someone else takes her

before we get there?'. Eamonn turned to me and said, 'Are you going to deny your son this dog?'

At 9am, we were outside Dogs Trust. We 'reserved' Maggie. On our way home, I gave the boys a big lecture, saying, 'She's OUR dog: I'm not doing all the feeding, walking and grooming'. Someone later came to our house to make sure it was suitable (which luckily it was) and I thought, 'We've done it now'. A week later, we went to get her, and we've never looked back.

At first I said, 'No dogs upstairs'. Then it was, 'No dogs on beds and sofas'. Within weeks, she was sleeping on Jack's bed and now she sleeps there every night. But it's lovely – they are real companions. She's Eamonn's dog, though. Jack would say she is his, but she totally thinks she's Eamonn's dog.

Maggie has enhanced our family life massively. She's another family member and has such character – she makes us laugh and smile all the time. She's got her little foibles, just like a person: every time I come home, she brings me a present – she doubles back to go and get her octopus toy, but she'll never actually relinquish it!

She's also transformed Eamonn's view of pets. Having always been quite anti-animals, he's a bit of a softie now! I walked into the sitting room the other day and he was practically shedding ➔

Ruth wears: Mac, Linea at House of Fraser. Jeans, Ida at Donna Ida. Necklace, Shi Cashmere. Maggie wears: Collar, Holly & Lili. Country Living Special Edition Pashley bike, Pashley

Prima people

‘Maggie has
enhanced our family
life massively – and
she’s improved
my fitness, too’



Prima people

a tear over a programme about two wallabies stuck in a dried-up water hole!

He's also become really relaxed. He used to be the lawn police and would literally walk around with his hands behind his back inspecting the grass. He was only happy when it looked like a bowling green. Now, there are these yellow patches, courtesy of Maggie, and he points them out with a smile like, 'isn't that sweet?' That's how I know he is smitten.

It's often me who walks Maggie – especially since Eamonn's recent hip operation – but I actually enjoy it. It's relaxation, fresh air and it clears my head. I put my trainers on and rarely answer my phone; it's my time alone. Having a dog has also added to my fitness, because Maggie needs a walk, come what may.

Joys of spring

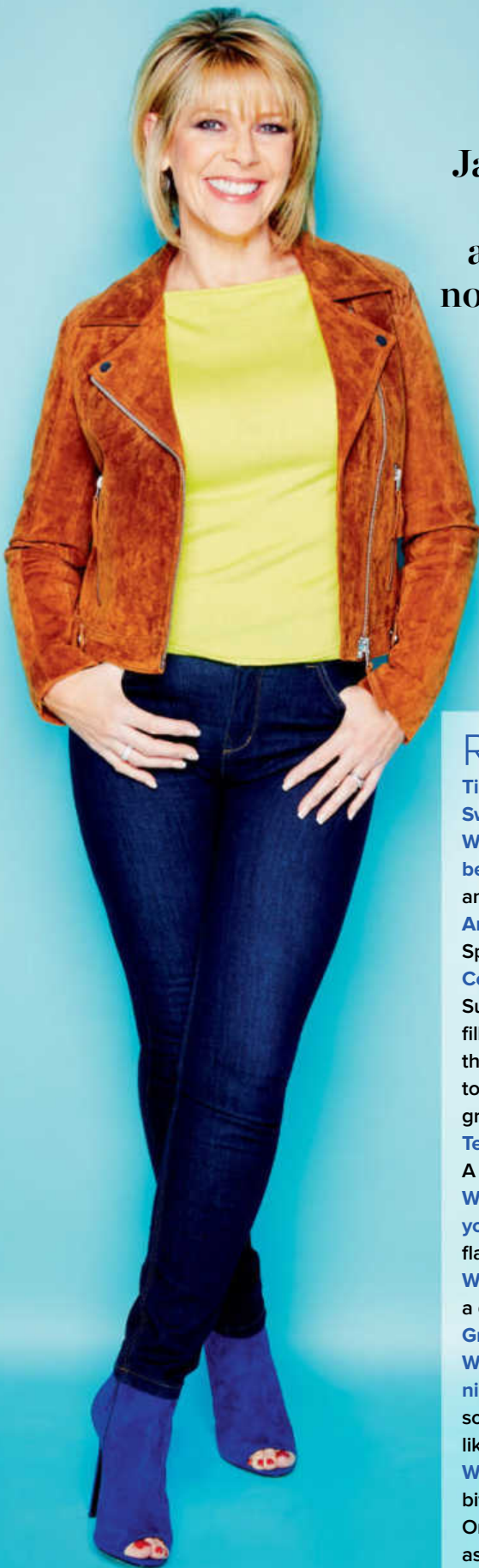
However, I'm not that fit. Theoretically, I work out with a trainer twice a week, but the reality is that I haven't been for months. Winter is hard. It's dark when you get in from work and so it's much easier to exercise in spring and summer.

I really love the longer days in spring. Going out for evening walks feels so much nicer when it is light! And I adore spring flowers, such as daffodils, tulips, and all those buds of new beginnings.

I also enjoy having a good spring clean. I'm quite neat; not to the point that people are uncomfortable but I am a homebody – I like everything to be in the right place. For me, it's all about time management: I don't have time to be searching for the other shoe or the right pair of tights, so I need to know where everything is. It's a bit of a contrast to when I was growing up, though. When I was 15, you literally couldn't open my bedroom door because it was so messy!

Home life

So many men are not interested in interiors, but Eamonn is. The lovely thing about that is that it means that he'll come shopping for a new sofa and genuinely enjoy it. He's very into our



'I'm teaching Jack how to cook – mums have a responsibility not to send useless men out into the world!'

RUTH IN BRIEF

Tidy or messy? Tidy.

Sweet or savoury? Savoury.

What would your superpower be? To be able to talk 'dog' and understand Maggie.

Are you a saver or a spender? Spender!

Cosmetic surgery: yes or no? Surgery: possibly. Botox and fillers: never. In reality, I don't think I'll do either. I'd like to think I will grow old gracefully with my wrinkles.

Technology: friend or foe?

A friend I'd like to know better!

What would you change about yourself? I'd get my ears flattened because they stick out.

What are you best at? Being a good friend.

Greatest achievement? My son.

What keeps you awake at night? Nothing – even if there's something on my mind, I sleep like a log.

What's your motto? Sorry, it's a bit rude! KBO – Keep Bollocking On. I think it's an army phrase, as my dad always used to say it to me when he called me up.



home and is opinionated about furniture and colours; he says that I'm the safe one and he's more wild. He'll say things like, 'Let's paint that wall bright green'. On balance, I think that I tame him – and he pushes me out of my comfort zone.

Our house is contemporary, but comfortable. The sitting room is all greys and silvers, with a purple sofa – I veer towards neutrals, whereas Eamonn's always trying to push for a bright orange carpet. But he hasn't succeeded yet!

I love cooking. It's really important to me that Jack learns to cook, too. Mothers of sons have a responsibility not to send useless men out into the world because, apart from anything else, girls these days are just not going to put up with a useless man! So I'm determined that by the time he leaves home, he'll be able to cook four dishes from scratch, as well as wash and iron his own clothes.

I don't sit him down and say we are going to talk about feminism. But we do talk a lot about the importance of respecting women. Since he was young, he's always been interested in watching the news and that brings up questions. Yesterday, after the news, we ended up having a discussion about pornography.

As a parent in 2016, you can't just hide away. You have to inform yourself and talk to your children about the internet. I will say to Jack, 'As well as the internet being full of great stuff, there are some awful things on there and I can't protect you from that if you go looking.'

I don't shy away from the big topics and I never have. I've always answered

every question – but I keep my answers age-appropriate. When I report our conversations back to Eamonn, he always says, 'You said what?' It's because he is a good Catholic boy and never talked about any of this stuff growing up, so he finds it a bit excruciating to talk about it all now, even though he knows I am right to. He just gets embarrassed.

Yin and yang

It's the same when we are working together. If we're ever talking about anything to do with sex and I know Eamonn is uncomfortable, I instinctively take the lead. Then, if we are talking about films, Eamonn leads, as I'm not really a film buff. That's the best thing about working together – there's complete trust that's almost telepathic. But there is no jealousy at all between us – we are like yin and yang.

The biggest challenge is not bringing our private lives – and bickers – into work. We fail at that miserably – we can't help it and what you see on screen is exactly what we are like in real life. And the fact is, we are married. So if we are talking about, say, snoring we can take it a step further and talk about who snores – it's me, by the way. But that is our USP and people seem to like it.

I don't let Eamonn get away with much – I fight my corner. He's very witty and there is a lot of banter, which is exactly what we are like at home. And we have similar core values, despite different upbringings. Our parents had

long, happy marriages and we tend to like and dislike the same people. And, despite the bickering, we're very united – like a big tree with strong roots.

I love working with Eamonn and don't feel the need to do my own thing. But it's good for me to be seen working separately as well. I've loved doing *Loose Women* and I like the fact that it means we're not just 'Ruth and Eamonn'. People forget that I was a TV presenter for years before we got together!

Our weekends are very chilled. We really like being at home. Sometimes we have no plans at all, which is lovely, and other times we plan Sunday lunch with friends or see Eamonn's kids in Belfast. But all three of us are homebirds, really.

Eamonn and I still do date night. It's not usually anything big – just a pizza or the cinema. Eamonn would have date night twice a week if he could, but when I get home, all I want to do is stay in. I should probably make more of an effort.

We do have weekends away to reconnect, though. I remember my dad saying that you have to work at marriage and I used to think, 'How dull!' And I certainly don't think that marriage should be hard work, but you do have to invest in it – or it withers. It's easy to get distracted by work but I'm aware that Jack will be gone soon and it will be the two of us together again. I know some people get to that point and think, 'What on earth are we going to talk about now?' But I don't think that will happen for us. The great thing is, we really love each other's company.

—YOUR— *new* SEASON VIPs

(Very Important Pieces!)

Pack away those winter woollies and hit refresh! Here are spring's must-buys

SLEEVELESS JACKET

Outsmart those tricky in-between months with *the* new wardrobe staple. Pared back and understated, the sleeveless jacket is your new 24/7 hero piece. It's also perfect for anyone who doesn't love their upper arms as it can be slipped beautifully over a shirt, a jumper or even a dress.

Sleeveless **jacket**, £16, 8-20, Matalan. **Top**, £29.50, 8-20, Marks & Spencer. Paperbag-waist **culottes**, £18, 6-20, F&F at Tesco →





FASHIONABLE FLORALS

From striking blooms to totally tropical palm prints, florals have gone big, bold and beautiful this season. Want to up the fashion factor? Push the boundaries by mixing several clashing flower prints at once! Boyish bombers, relaxed trousers and pool-slider sandals add an edge to girly florals.

Floral **bomber**, £35, 8-20, Red Herring at Debenhams. Monochrome **top**, £35, 6-22, Marks & Spencer. Printed **trousers**, £30, 8-20, Wallis. Metallic **tote**, £90; chunky flat **sandals**, £40, 3-8, both Clarks

TEXTURED WHITE

Simple, sophisticated and seriously chic, top-to-toe white always looks luxe. Layers of texture add another dimension – swishy fringing, decadent beading and indulgent fabrics create something really special.

Floral appliqué **top**, £99,
14-26, Elvi Prima Premium
collection. Lace **dress**
(worn underneath), £139,
8-16, The White Company ➔

MODERN TAILORING

This season's smart dressing puts the focus firmly on white shirts and wrap skirts. The basic button-down has been reinvented – turning it from workwear staple to a gorgeous stand-out piece in its own right. Pair the look with strappy make-me-taller heels to add subtle sexiness.



White cotton **shirt**, £59, 6-16, Cos.
Leather wrap **skirt**, £129, 6-22,
Autograph at Marks & Spencer.
Gold **earrings**, £5.99, H&M. **Ring**,
£5, Accessorize. Strappy **sandals**,
£45, 3-8, Wallis

MAKE IT MONOCHROME

Black and white is the ultimate power pairing for those who are colour-phobic. Opt for striking fabrics and shapes and you'll gain instant fashion kudos. Looking for a figure-flattering skirt? You can't go wrong with an A-line – it whittles waists and keeps hips covered.

Lace **top**, £49.50, 6-22, Marks & Spencer. Floral full **skirt**, £129, 6-16, Hobbs. **Earrings**, £4, Wallis. Leather **bag**, £49, Nica. Leather **heels**, £250, 2-9, LK Bennett →





OFF-THE-SHOULDER

One of the major silhouettes for spring has to be the sexy – but not too revealing – exposed shoulder. We're thrilled because, let's face it, who hates their shoulders? No one! From cutaways and peepholes to bandeaus and halternecks, the one thing to remember is a great strapless bra!

Off-the-shoulder **blouse**, £129, 6-16, Hobbs. Leather **skirt**, £85, 6-16, Oasis. **Earrings**, £3.99; **necklace**, £7.99; **bangle**, £6.99, all H&M

GIRLY WITH A TWIST

Sweet, feminine looks have been reworked to become super-chic this season. This stunning jumpsuit is a great example – girly but really cool, the pretty chiffon overlay makes it fresh and modern. Pair with chunky sandals – and a relaxed attitude.

Sheer overlay **jumpsuit**, £55, 8-18, Wallis.
Suede panel **clutch**, £40, Laura Ashley.
Block-heel **sandals**, £18, 3-8, Primark ➔

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*Among leading retail permanent shades and pre-formulated salon colour.

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*based on IRI volume sales August 2014 to August 2015

GORGEOUS GINGHAM

It may be reminiscent of tablecloths and jam pots, but gingham spells out summer like no other print! Once regularly worn by Marilyn, Audrey and Jackie O – it's back in a big way this season. Simply polish off your look with a stand-out necklace.

Gingham **top**, £35; matching **skirt**, £35, both 8-20, Marks & Spencer. White **shirt**, £29.95, xxs-xxl, Gap. Oversized **necklace**, £18, Dorothy Perkins ➔





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*AVEENO® Daily Moisturising Lotion. Beauty product trial Sept 2013, 911 Irish women.
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SUPERSTAR STRIPES

You can't beat a stylish stripe for instant elegance. What makes this year's different from previous versions? Line up for a more playful mood with horizontal and vertical, thick and thin, multicoloured and monochrome – there's something for everyone. Embrace the ultimate reboot by pairing contrasting colours and widths.

Striped, short-sleeved **top**, £32, xs-l, United Colors of Benetton.
Striped, belted **skirt**, £65, 6-18, Banana Republic. Peep-toe **heels**, £145, 3-8, Lisa Kay

Styling Amanda Marcantonio
Assisted by Helen Johnson and Kate Cockburn
Photography Neil Marriott
Hair & make-up Ian McIntosh
Floristry Hayley Christou

For where to buy, see page 160



Great value!

Ooooh, new shoes!

Step forward spring's most swoon-worthy footwear

Fancy flats

From ladylike loafers to beautiful brogues, these shoes will add a statement to every outfit (and keep your feet happy, too!).



Great value!



- 1** Orange ballet pump, £59, 3-8, Dune **2** Silver punched brogue, £79.95, 3-8, Moda in Pelle
3 Red lace-up, £25, 3-8, Faith at Debenhams **4** Snakeskin pointed, £95, 3-8, Vince Camuto **5** Leather loafer, £79, 3-8, Dune **6** Cobalt lace-up, £25, 3-8, Marks & Spencer
7 Leather brogue, £165, 3-8, Best of British at Marks & Spencer

Great value!



Head over heels

Guaranteed to give all your friends shoe envy, these beauties are just what your wardrobe has been waiting for. The motto is: the brighter, the better!

8 Monochrome striped, £15, 3-8, Matalan **9** Multicoloured snakeskin, £99.95, 3-8, Moda in Pelle **10** Red T-bar, £89, 3-8, Jones Bootmaker **11** Cobalt and gold, £145, 3-8, Lisa Kay **12** Red snakeskin, £95, 3-8, Nine West **13** Leather d'orsay, £185, 2-9, LK Bennett **14** Orange tassel, £119, 3-8, Boden **15** Fuchsia block heel, £65, 3-8, Clarks **16** Gold punched, £110, 3-8, Vince Camuto

For where to buy, see page 160

Jean therapy

AT LAST, THE PERFECT FIT!

Slimming, butt-lifting, leg-lengthening – we've found jeans to suit every shape



STRAIGHT CUT

A good all-rounder

These are guaranteed to make you feel taller, slimmer and leggier.

The sleek shape and streamlined cut minimises thighs and flatters pins without feeling snug. Works wonders on all figures for all occasions.

GREAT FOR A classic longer, leaner look.

Jeans, £80, W26-34, Levi's. Long-sleeved **top**, £14.99, xxs-xxl, Gap. Sleeveless **coat**, £299, 8-20, Marks & Spencer. **Bag**, £59, Dune. **Shoes**, £58, 3-8, River Island

Style tip

Want an all-over slimming jean? Lose pounds just by putting on a dark indigo pair



Dark wash,
£16, 8-18,
BHS



Light wash,
£159.95,
4-22, NYDJ



Mid wash,
£89, 6-18,
Jaeger

Trend alert!

COLOURED JEANS

Stuck in a jeans rut? Bright and beautiful denim is just what your springtime wardrobe has been craving!



Red,
£24,
8-22,
M&Co



Pink,
£129.95,
4-22, NYDJ



FLARE

The ultimate leg-lengthener

With a slim fit through the upper leg and a kick from the knee, flared jeans have been labelled the new bootcut. The wider hem adds balance to fuller hips and the high waistline helps to create a sexy, hourglass silhouette. Seriously, what's not to love?

GREAT FOR Disguising a fuller bottom and making legs look endless.

Expert tip

'When shopping, take your time – try different fits and find a pair that fit your curves. You will be amazed what you can pull off!' Lyanne Simon, international sales manager, NYDJ



STREET STYLE



Mid wash,
£100, W24-32, Levi's

Dark wash,
£22, 6-22, Next

Frayed hem, £85,
W24-34, Jigsaw

Pocket,
£35, 12-32, Simply Be

DENIM SOS

Think you'll never find a pair to fit you? We're here to help

Q Can jeans help me look like I've lost weight?

A Go on a denim diet and invest in a pair with built-in control panels. Designed to smooth tums, lift bottoms and slim thighs, they truly are miracle workers. For a sleeker silhouette, look for a mid-rise jean with some stretch that sits just below your belly button.



Waist-enhancer skinny,
£40, 6-18, Next

Shaping skinny,
£22.99, 6-16, Zara

Q Is there a pair of jeans that will flatter my ample bottom but won't gape at the waist?

A Look for shapes with a curved waistband and medium rise in a low-stretch fabric. Try the amazing 'Wedgie' jeans by Levi's. They're fitted at the waist, with give in the bottom and hips, and a snug fit on the thighs. We also rate Evans' 'Pear' range. ➔



'Wedgie', £95,
W24-32, Levi's

'Pear' boyfriend,
£30, 16-32, Evans



ELVI | **prima**

PREMIUM COLLECTION

elvi.co.uk

BOYFRIEND

Fashion forward

Cut generously through the leg and often cuffed at the ankle, this relaxed shape is the fashion crowd's current fave. The bonus? They're surprisingly figure-friendly and the loose fit creates the illusion of narrower hips. Team them with a tucked-in fitted top.

GREAT FOR Downplaying chunky legs. Cuff the hems to show a peep of ankle.

Mid wash,
£65, 6-16,
Hush

Rose embroidered,
£54.95,
W24-35, Gap

Mid wash,
£29.50,
8-22, Marks
& Spencer

Jeans, £15;
shirt, £8, both
8-24; **bag,** £9;
boots, £18,
3-8, all Primark

Feature: Helen Johnson **Street-style photos:**
David Nyanzi, Imaxtree, Neil Marriot

Trend alert!

DENIM CULOTTES

For an on-trend alternative to classic jeans, opt for denim culottes. The youthful, relaxed shape skims over heavy hips and thighs in the most flattering way and the breezy cut will take you into the summer months.



Button,
£29,
8-24,
Very



Two-tone,
£38, 4-18,
River
Island



STREET STYLE

DENIM DECODED

From slimming side seams to perfect pockets, here are some brilliantly body-loving features to look out for when choosing your best ever pair of jeans.

● **POCKETS** Large pockets will slim your rear, while small ones will enhance it.

● **STRETCH** Aim for between 1-3% elastane for jeans that will retain their shape but won't enter jeggings territory.

● **SEAMS** Side seams that

are closer to the front of the leg are the most slimming.

● **HEMS** This season, roll up your jeans as many times as you like, but remember that cuffs look most flattering when they sit one inch above your ankles.

● **RISE** High-rise jeans are brilliant at smoothing tummies and making you look taller instantly. Low rise creates the illusion of curvier hips and adds length to short torsos. ➔

Chic for your shape

Light wash,
£95, 8-22,
Long Tall
Sally

SLIM FIT

Tummy?
What tummy?

Close fitting from waist to ankle, skinny jeans are a modern style staple for most women, and particularly good if you prefer to camouflage troublesome tums with forgiving floaty tops and tunics. The play on proportions (loose top with skinny jeans) is an ageless fashion formula that works every time.

GREAT FOR

Disguising tummies
and playing up
slim pins.

**High-waist
mid wash,**
£90, W23-
33, Levi's

Expert tip
'Don't change your
body, change your
jeans!' Amanda
Marcantonio, Prima
fashion editor

Black, £40,
W24-34,
Topshop

White,
£12, 8-22,
George

GIRLFRIEND

Taper your assets!

Love the look of boyfriend jeans but super-slouchy isn't your thing? Seek out girlfriend or slim-fit boyfriend jeans instead. The key to the perfect cut is a waistband at tummy-button height, a snug fit on the hips, tapered legs and ankle-grazer hems.

GREAT FOR Getting the relaxed look of a boyfriend jean while still highlighting your legs.

STREET STYLE

For all sizes

CHIC FOR PETITES

Petite Legs, Next Petite, Gap and Banana Republic all have jeans starting from a UK size 2 with a 24-26in inseam.

TALL STORY

Find denim made for your lovely long legs at Long Tall Sally, Topshop and ASOS Tall, which all stock up to 38in inseams.

Boyfriend,
£44.95,
W24-35, Gap

**Premium
slim-leg,**
£95, 8-22,
Long Tall
Sally

Slim-fit,
£28, 6-18,
Next

**Ripped
boyfriend,**
£42,
W24-32,
Topshop

Ripped,
£92, 14-20,
Navabi

Cuffed,
£45, 6-16,
Oasis

Drawstring,
£100,
8-22, Betty
Barclay



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tiny pieces



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Black Bronze Glitter Dark Pink Mid Green Navy Lizard White Gold Vintage Floral Soft Beige Black Cornflower Blue Crimson Dark Aqua

JEWEL

Sizes 3-9, Standard, Extra Wide & Half Sizes

Beautiful ballerina pump, Jewel slips on softly with pillow-like cushioning that's gentle underfoot. Naturally breathable leather makes this flat shoe feel ultra-fresh.



"They are pretty and so comfortable. They feel as if they were made for me as they are the perfect fit. I don't want to take them off!!"

Cath, Bristol

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"Beautiful soft supple leather shoes, comfortable from the first wear. Thanks Hotter!"

Laura, Cheshire

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Hot pink tote, £45,
United Colors of Benetton



Two-tone tote,
£23, BHS



Yellow mock croc,
£49, J by Jasper Conran
at Debenhams



Teal tote, £149, Ralph
Lauren at House of Fraser



Two-tone satchel,
£35, Simply Be



Two-tone shoulder bag,
£69, House of Fraser



Laser-cut satchel,
£25, Clarks



Tassel backpack,
£45, Butterfly by Matthew
Williamson at Debenhams



Green circle bag,
£45, Fiorelli



Tassel clutch,
£35, Jones Bootmaker

Break out of your BLACK BAG RUT!

Lift your look with these bold, new season bags – they're great value, too!



Red tote,
£29, M&Co



Orange backpack, £27,
United Colors of Benetton



Pompom tote,
£19.99, New Look



Dark green tote,
£50, Laura Ashley



Double buckle tote,
£45, Jones Bootmaker



Red clutch,
£18, BHS



Metal-handled tote,
£17.99, New Look



Yellow satchel,
£27, Accessorize



Green mock croc, £49,
J by Jasper Conran
at Debenhams



Blue circle bag,
£9.99, Deichmann

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Exclusive!

A first look at the NEW ELVI PRIMA COLLECTION

Due to the overwhelming response to our first fashion collaboration with Elvi last autumn/winter, we've designed a new range for spring/summer – and it's even more beautiful than the previous one! Whether you're going to a wedding or Ascot, there's tons of white and gold, touchable textures, floral appliqué details, tassels and feathers to add a dash of decadence to any summer occasion. It's available in sizes 14-26 – after all, why should curvy girls miss out on show-stopping glam?



Embellished blouse, £55; Jacquard skirt, £99, both 14-26, Elvi Prima Premium Collection

Style solutions from our senior fashion editor AMANDA MARCANTONIO



STRAP YOURSELF IN

Is it time for a new statement accessory? The Fairfield watches at Timex come in a rainbow of glorious brights and will pep up neutral outfits a treat. The only issue is which colour combo to choose...

Watches, £54.99 each, Timex

Buy it, wear it, love it!

Win...

A £500 SHOPPING SPREE AT NEXT



Sugar-coated

You can't get prettier than pastels for spring and, while there's still a chill in the air, these candy-coloured cover-ups make the perfect outfit toppers. Opt for soft pinks, peaches and blues, then dress them up or down. We like ours best teamed with sailor stripes and off-duty denim.



- ① **Lace trench**, £85, 8-20, R.J.R. John Rocha at Debenhams
- ② **Blue linen**, £89, 6-16, Carven for La Redoute
- ③ **Pink waterfall**, £27.99, 8-18, New Look

Jacket, £184.99, 14-28, Navabi. **Striped top**, £35, 8-22, House of Fraser. **Jeans**, £26, 8-20, Red Herring at Debenhams. **Clutch**, £35, Jones Bootmaker. **Sandals**, £17.99, 3-8, New Look

From luxe tailoring to stepped-up style staples, Next's spring collection has all you need to fast-track your wardrobe into the new season. So we've teamed up with the high-street fave to give one lucky reader a shopping spree worth £500.

To enter, visit prima.co.uk/fashion by 5 April 2016. T&Cs apply*.

Jumper, £34; **shirt**, £25; **skirt**, £30, all 8-18; **shoes**, £48, 3-9, all Next



‘We rediscovered our childhood passions,’

Who says being an adult can't be fun? Meet four women who tapped into their nostalgia to turn a youthful hobby into a grown-up pleasure

‘Dancing helped me to reconnect with my grandparents’

Tracey Robinson, 45, runs a PR company and lives in Bude, Cornwall, with husband Darren, 47.

‘**G**liding across the room doing a quickstep, I'm in my element; enjoying the grace of the movement. It's only been in the past few years that I've rediscovered my love of ballroom dancing. I had abandoned it when I was 11 – but my feet have fallen right back into step!

My grandparents were avid dancers – they took classes regularly and went along to a dance every week. As a child, I remember watching them move around the room with style and poise.

When I was nine, they offered to take me and my younger sister Sally along to a Saturday class for kids. We loved it and even took part in competitions, knowing our grandparents were proud that we shared their passion.

But as I approached my teens, I began to feel embarrassed by it all. People associated ballroom dancing with older people, and it was seriously uncool. Too afraid to break the news to my grandparents myself, I asked my mum to tell them I didn't want to dance anymore.

It wasn't until *Strictly Come Dancing* got really popular a few years ago that I even thought about dancing again. It became a talking point for me and my nana, and helped me see that ballroom had received a makeover. Everyone was having a go, and with the costumes and great music, I fell in love with it again.

So when a beginners' class launched at my local community centre, in September 2014, I thought about giving it another go. I felt nervous going along on my own, but Jeff, who ran the classes and had been teaching dancing for years, soon put me at ease. I also bumped into a woman who lived nearby, Anna, and we became dance partners. As usual, there were far more women than men!

As the class went on, I couldn't believe how much I remembered. When asked to do a step, I wouldn't be able to recall the name, but as soon as we started practising it came right back to me. It was as if my feet were one step ahead of my brain!

By the end of the lesson, my endorphins were racing from moving about the room. I was on a real high.

I decided to keep going, and have invested in a pair of proper dancing shoes with a soft sole so I can glide across the floor. I go to a class every

Tuesday evening, and happily partner up with anyone, dancing the man's steps as well as the woman's if I need to.

There are a lot of older people at the class, and it's lovely to have an opportunity for different generations to mingle. It reminds me of my grandparents, who are no longer with us, and the bond I had with them.

CONFIDENCE BOOST

My favourite dance is the quickstep – a modern ballroom dance – as it moves you around the floor at lightning speed and demands a lot of skill to get right. But everything about ballroom is elegant, and the shapes you make on the dance floor are so beautiful.

My husband Darren isn't comfortable dancing, so it's something I do for myself. But he knows how happy it makes me and, last year, he booked me into a dance school in London. We went there for the weekend and he loved watching me take to the floor.

Getting back into ballroom dancing has given me such a confidence boost. But, more importantly, it's given me a lovely link to the past. Whenever I twirl around the floor, I think of my grandparents – and I smile.'

• [facebook.com/northcornwallanddevondancing](https://www.facebook.com/northcornwallanddevondancing) ➔

‘Everything about
ballroom dancing
is elegant – getting
back into it has
given me such a
confidence boost’



‘Cancer led me back to the stage’

Joy Tugwell, 52, a teacher and progress mentor, lives in South Ockenden, Essex. She’s divorced and has two daughters, Claire, 29, and Fiona, 25.

‘Not many people get a second chance at life. But after my brush with cancer, I truly felt that was what I’d been given, and I vowed not to waste another moment. It was that very thought that led me back to my first love – acting.

My love of drama began at school, thanks to my inspirational drama teacher, Mr Hodgkin.

Not many schools were doing musicals like *Jesus Christ Superstar*, but he was willing to take risks, and we loved it.

My first production was *Oliver!*, when I was 14. I was only in the chorus, but I felt like I was part of something important. I was hooked.

Drama gave me so much, breaking down school cliques and helping me make friends.

In my twenties, I joined an amateur dramatics society, but life often got in the way.

When I took a new job as a receptionist in London, it became difficult to get to rehearsals, so I began to go less. And, after

having my daughters, drama faded into a distant memory.

The lure of the greasepaint was still there when

I took the girls to a panto or a film, but while I longed to be up there and part of the action, I simply didn’t have the time.

Then, in March 1996, my world was turned upside down when I was diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma at only 32.

I had to have chemotherapy for six months, and spent two months in hospital. Lying on the ward day after day made me re-evaluate my life, which led me to write a book about my experiences to help others. It sounds a cliché, but I realised life wasn’t a dress rehearsal. I vowed to get better so I could do the things that made me smile once again. Top of the list was drama.

A friend was part of an amateur dramatic group in nearby Stock, so I decided to audition to become a member. I was wracked with nerves, but once I got going, it all came back to me. I was thrilled when I was cast as one of the main characters in a play called *Proscenophobia* (stage fright!).

Going along to rehearsals in the village hall felt like a dream come true. It was just like the old days as we laughed when we got things wrong. My friends and family came on opening night and, from the moment the curtain went up, I was on a high.

Since then, I’ve carried on performing with the group and have made some great friendships. There are about 40 of us altogether – aged 20 to 80 – and there’s nothing like the camaraderie that comes with putting on a show.

One of the things I love about acting is that it takes you out of your comfort zone – starring in *Calendar Girls* certainly did that! Posing for the posters to advertise the show was the first time we went naked and we were all shaking with nerves. We made sure we were staring into each other’s eyes so no one thought we were looking at their bodies!

Getting back into acting has been so wonderful. I only wish it hadn’t been illness that led me back to the thing I love. But today, I can honestly say that I’m making the most of every moment.’

• Joy’s e-book, *Will It Grow Back Mummy?* (£3.35), is out now. A donation from the sale of each book will be divided equally between Sarcoma UK and Bloodwise

‘Life isn’t a dress rehearsal – you have to make the most of every moment’



Joy wears: Dress, Phase Eight. Necklace, Diva. Bracelets, Dorothy Perkins. Shoes, Next
Victoria wears: Shrug, dress, both Phase Eight. Jewellery, Dorothy Perkins. Shoes, Next

‘Riding was the missing piece in my life’

Victoria Mercer, 45, a software testing consultant, lives in Widdrington, Northumberland, with her husband, Neil, 43.

‘As a teenager, my bedroom walls were covered in posters of horses – with a few of Adam Ant in between. The posters might have gone, but my love for riding is as strong as ever.

Aged 12, I was lucky enough to get my own pony, a grey Connemara called Briar, and happily spent my weekends and holidays at gymkhanas and pony club events. I loved everything about it – the bond I had with Briar, the new friends I made at the pony club summer camps, and the thrill of competing in showjumping tournaments. My enthusiasm for horses never waned. I was happiest on horseback.

There was only one problem – my weight. Towards the end of my teens, I veered between a size 16 and 18 and, by the time I was working in an office in my twenties, I got bigger still. Working as a software testing consultant, it became more and more difficult to fit riding into my schedule. My job involved travelling to Germany, where I gorged on stodgy food, so inevitably, I put on more weight. The bigger I became, the less confident I felt, until

the idea of climbing on to a horse again became terrifying. I never consciously gave up riding, but after I married Neil in 2006, I stopped altogether.

I tried to put it out of my mind, but I always felt as if a part of me was missing. Whenever I saw a horse in a film, I’d feel overcome with nostalgia – recalling the magic of that special bond between human and animal.

By the time I turned 40 in January 2011, I weighed 18st and wore a size 24. Struggling with even the simplest tasks, such as putting on my shoes, I finally decided to do something about it. Last April, I signed up to Lighter Life and, using their meal-replacement shakes, I lost a stone in the first month.

Then, in May, I decided to treat myself by going along to a local horse show. “This is it,” I thought. “This is what I’ve been missing out on.”

Feeling a renewed sense of confidence, I called some local riding schools, and found one with a horse strong enough to carry my 16st frame.

So that was how I found myself squeezing into a pair of jodhpurs with a 38in waist and, for the first time in nine years, climbing on to a horse. My legs felt weak, but just sitting on top of a horse again made me feel on top of the world – I was back where I belonged.

We went on a hack across fields and bridlepaths and, by the time I climbed off an hour later, I couldn’t wipe the grin off my face. Though I felt stiff, I couldn’t wait to get back on the horse.

Recalling the special relationship I’d had with Briar all those years

ago, I started looking for a horse of my own. That July, I bought Paddy, a grey, like Briar. He was a bit “green” – horse-speak for inexperienced – so we learned together.

Paddy lives at a livery yard that’s just a 10-minute drive from my house, and I ride two or three times a week. Getting out in the fresh air and seeing Northumberland from horseback is a feeling that can’t be matched.

All that exercise, along with the Lighter Life diet, has helped me keep up the weight loss, too, and I now weigh a healthy 10st 5lbs.

Riding was such a big part of my life for so long that I can’t believe I allowed myself to miss out for nearly 10 years. But getting back in the saddle (quite literally!) has been one of the best things I’ve ever done.’ ➔

‘Riding again after nine years made me feel on top of the world’





‘My daughter helped me to rediscover my love for crafts’

Sarah Bohn, 38, runs her own swimwear business from her home in Milton Keynes, where she lives with daughter Samantha, 11.

‘Growing up in the 1980s, I was used to my mum making clothes for me and my older brother, Tim. She liked to teach us how to do it, too. Her patience never failing, she taught me how to sew and, aged seven, I made my first creation – an orange cushion.

At school, I did cross stitching and would bring all my creations home for Mum to display proudly.

I went on to do a GCSE in textiles, but as I got older, craft fell by the wayside – it just wasn’t trendy. Plus, once I’d set up my business and had my daughter Samantha, I was so busy I rarely had any time for myself.

Then, in September 2013, I decided to clear out my spare room and, with a bit of space to store my fabric and a room to enjoy some quiet time,

I began to think about sewing again. At the same time, Samantha told me her primary school was looking for someone to run a sewing club. Recalling those joyful hours spent with my mother, I jumped at the chance.

I returned to all the projects I’d done at school, such as making a felt bookmark, sewing on buttons and creating little glove puppets. The children loved it. Buying more materials reminded me how much I enjoyed everything to do with haberdashery.

I began to make things for myself again, too. That Christmas, I made a cotton shopping bag with a banana pattern as a present for one friend, and an apron for another.

To my delight, sewing was no longer uncool. I discovered Pinterest, where people post pictures of their craft projects, and found countless websites with ideas and tips.

‘It’s therapeutic to sit quietly and let your fingers do the work as your mind relaxes’

Just like my mum did for me all those years ago, I began to make outfits for Samantha, too. My proudest moment was seeing her dressed as a Victorian woman in a long travelling cape with little rosette flowers that I’d made for her for school. She looked fantastic.

Of course, it’s not just the finished product that counts – I enjoy the actual process of sewing, too. After many years of working hard to run my own swimwear business and rushing around as a single parent, I’ve allowed myself to take a little me-time. It’s therapeutic to sit quietly and let your fingers do the work as your mind relaxes.

Having rediscovered my passion, I’ve started a blog (sarahjanebohn.com) to share my tips. I hope it will inspire anyone else who’s thinking of taking up sewing again, or even trying it for the first time. I’m living proof that making a trip back to your childhood can be very rewarding!

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‘I never get tired of looking at a HAPPY HEN!’

Jane Howorth MBE has saved 500,000 chickens – and counting

Charity worker Jane, 55, lives with her husband, Robin, in Chulmleigh, Devon. She was awarded an MBE in the New Year’s Honours list for her work re-homing battery chickens.

‘**T**he advert I placed in my local paper was the ultimate cry for help: “We’re battery chickens who have never seen the sunshine or tasted grass. Is there anyone out there who can offer us a better life?”

I’ve always loved animals – in fact, they actually brought my husband, Robin, a retired engineer, and me together. Aged 23, I was volunteering at an animal shelter in Reading, Berkshire, where he had wanted to find a home for his Great Dane dog. I did a home visit, the dog never left, and eventually I moved in!

But my real passion was chickens. I’d watched a documentary in my teens on how battery hens were destined for slaughter when they were just 18 months old. I wanted to help them, so I wrote letters lobbying my MP to stop it happening. I would have loved to have adopted ex-battery chickens, but we had no room, plus I was busy working as a PA.

But after Robin and I married in 1994, life took a new direction. We both yearned for country life and decided to take the plunge and move to



Hen party: Jane with one of her rescue chickens

Chulmleigh, a small village in Devon.

Robin and I didn’t plan to have children, so feathers and paws became my focus. We had a large garden and decided it was time to help ex-battery hens. I didn’t have a clue where to find them and my approach was very

haphazard: I simply drove around country lanes looking for farms that looked “chickeny”! I was in luck – one farmer was due to send 4,000 hens to slaughter where they would be used in processed food, animal feed or sold abroad. He agreed I could have as

many as I wanted. I left with 36 chickens packed into the back of my Mini Metro.

They were a bedraggled bunch and I cared for them by trial and error. I converted a pigsty in the garden into a home, while friends who had chickens showed me the ropes. Each morning I'd go on a treasure hunt to see if they had laid eggs. The celebratory clucks as my girls greeted me filled me with joy. The hens included Vicky, who waddled like a penguin and loved sitting on my lap, and Yoko, so named because she arrived covered in yolk with two broken legs. Within weeks of providing good food and freedom, I saw my Ex-Bat Girls transformed into glossy, beautiful birds.

Over time, I built a relationship with a slaughterhouse and each year I would visit and swap a tin of Quality Street for as many hens as I could fit into my car. I always chose the weakest; those who'd had the hardest life. It felt the kindest way of selecting which ones to take.

For the next seven years, life was blissful. While some chickens were too weak to survive, slowly my flock grew. I built bigger chicken coops, and in the end had about 200 chickens! Along with two dogs, an old horse and a few ducks, they formed quite a menagerie.

But I also felt I could be doing more. There were so many chickens I couldn't save. While I felt sure other people might help me, I didn't know where to begin.

Then, in 2002, everything changed again. Within a year, I lost both my parents to cancer. I felt utterly bereft, but through my grief I suddenly saw that I had to make it my life's mission to help more hens. I needed to spread the word.

And that is what was behind that first

advert. I bought a van with some of the inheritance I received from my parents so I could transport more chickens. In October 2003, I brought 100 hens home with me, and within three days they were re-homed. I went back for 100 more. Chickens have universal appeal, so some went to families with children, others were collected by retired couples looking for company and some even went to an old people's home.

Before long, a newspaper heard what I was doing and I then received calls and donations from further afield.

Gradually, I built an army of volunteers and, within two years, my charity, the British Hen Welfare Trust, was born. Using my spare room as an office, I created a network of volunteers across the country. By 2005, we had re-homed 5,000 hens.

The past 10 years have been a roller coaster and challenging at times, but Robin has been really supportive. I've never worked so hard in my life; in those early years, 15-hour days were the norm.

Two years ago, we moved the charity to a proper office. Our operation is now a professional one, with 10 staff and 470 volunteers. Despite our humble beginnings, in January we re-homed our half-millionth hen – we called her Dee (D is 500 in Roman numerals).

What drives me is the joy our Ex-Bat Girls bring to so many families. There are many stories of tatty threadbares blossoming into endearing characters. There's Bump, who likes to join her family for breakfast, Patsy who loves a cuddle with her human siblings, and Miss Marple and Agatha who settle down to watch the film *Chicken Run* with their owners.

Support has come from amazing places

CHICKEN FUN

Jane's guide to happy hens...

- Hens are responsive creatures, so commitment to their daily care is essential.
- They're vulnerable to predators, such as foxes and badgers, so a secure hen house is also a must.
- Good-quality feed creates tastier eggs; try the Smallholder Range.
- Hens are naturally inquisitive and love nothing more than to rootle for bugs and slugs, so garden space is on their wish-list.
- Ex-commercial hens are renowned for their friendliness, and just a little TLC will help their endearing and cheeky personalities to flourish.

over the years, not least Jamie Oliver. The week after we appeared on his TV show *Jamie's Fowl Dinners* we received 4,000 calls to adopt a hen! Celebrities – including Prima columnist Caroline Quentin – have adopted from us, too.

Our charity campaigns for improved conditions for chickens everywhere and for more people to buy free-range eggs. We were instrumental in persuading Hellmann's Mayonnaise to go free-range – an incredible result that meant 1.8 million hens got a better quality of life.

I tell people that eggs aren't just for Easter. With our girls, you can have wonderful free-range eggs all year round – and they're much better for you than chocolate! I feel so honoured that I've been able to commit my life to something I'm so passionate about. I never get tired of looking at a happy hen.'

• Visit the British Hen Welfare Trust website at bhwt.org.uk; 01884 860084

'Our Ex-Bat Girls bring so much joy'

Feature: Rachel Mostyn Photos: Barry Gomez, Getty





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Uh-oh... it's a **MAN PLAN!**



Food, fun or DIY – there's nothing like a 'project' to show up the differences between the sexes, says Fiona Gibson

A few weeks ago I mentioned to my husband, Jimmy, that I wanted us to go on a date. Of course, what I really meant (but refused to say, as I wanted him to get the message via telepathy), was that I wanted him to organise it. Life had been very hectic and I wanted no part in choosing and booking tickets or a restaurant. I just wanted it to happen.

Happen it did, meticulously planned by my man and encompassing – wait for it – a jaunt from our home town of Glasgow to Edinburgh, where we had a sauna and swim, browsed antiques, stopped for lunch, saw two exhibitions, watched a movie and went out to dinner. It was an action-packed day and by the time we got home I was zonked out. 'It was lovely,' I said, hobbling upstairs to our flat, silently adding, but you know what? Just one, or at most two, of those activities would have sufficed.

I don't want to sound ungrateful. It was an excellent, if exhausting, day (at one point we were running up a hill to the cinema to get there in time). However, it struck me that men and women tend to approach the planning of a project (and that's what it felt like) very differently. 'Uh-ho, it's a man plan,' remarked my friend Jo when, after months of inactivity on the DIY front, her partner Barry snapped into action, fixing the wonky roof on their car port, painting a garden fence and laying concrete slabs on their path – all in one afternoon. Or at least, starting all of these projects. None were finished because Barry had bitten off more than he could chew.

Any of my women friends would have selected just one task and tackled it with



reasonable care until finished, then felt delighted for a job well done.

In my experience, as women are so used to juggling work and family, we tend to be more realistic about what can be achieved. So, if Jimmy and I invite friends for supper, I'll think 'keep it simple – bit of fish whacked in the oven,

'I applauded his efforts, but supper served in our trashed kitchen was hardly relaxing'

plus salad, mini roast potatoes, posh bread and lashings of wine.' What else do hungry friends need?

Occasionally, though, Jimmy will offer to cook. 'Great!' I think – because it *is* great. I couldn't bear to live with a man who has never chopped a vegetable (like my friend Lorna's husband, who offered to make pumpkin soup: his cue to dump a whole pumpkin into a pot of boiling water with explosive results). I'm lucky Jimmy enjoys cooking – at

least special, occasional 'glory' cooking, rather than repetitive weeknight spag bols. Given free rein, he'll go all out to make a *MasterChef* meal. It's show-off cooking in the extreme. Here's what he made for our friends: carrot and coriander soup (insisting on harvesting carrots from our garden, which were the size of fingernails), home-baked bread, then some Lebanese layered pancake construction involving sloshing tomato sauce about, coating the kitchen with flour, cracking the lid of the blender and much swearing. My plan – to bake a nice piece of cod – wasn't thrilling enough.

While I had to applaud his efforts, the supper – served in our trashed kitchen with bits of broken appliance lying about – was hardly relaxing. You could almost see the cloud of stress hovering above our heads. 'Wow, that was an ambitious dinner,' remarked one of our friends, which, translated, means: 'a man plan if ever there was one'. Still, we festooned him with praise before he sloped off to bed early... then I got on with clearing up.

• Fiona's new novel, *The Woman Who Upped and Left* (Avon, £7.99), is out now

It's good to be MOODY!

No one likes feeling low, but the pressures of modern life mean that some down days are inevitable. But what if we told you being in a grump can be good for you?

How are you feeling today? If, despite all your best efforts, it's better not to ask (you've fallen out with your other half, rushed your protesting child to school and arrived at work 10 minutes late), take a deep breath and prepare to hear the good news: you're normal!

Modern life has made us busier and more stressed than ever before, which, coupled with the hormonal fluctuations that naturally occur from our thirties onwards, can make for some pressure-cooker moments. But bad moods aren't all, well, bad.

'Bad moods are what we call "propulsive",' says psychologist

and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) practitioner Anna Hamer (ahamer.co.uk). 'Anger galvanises us into action, while a persistent low mood may prompt us to take stock of our lives, and anxiety makes us hyper-alert to potentially dangerous circumstances. In the same way that a high temperature alerts us to physical illness, negative emotions are there to protect us psychologically.'

Look at it this way – if we were never in a grump, how would we ever appreciate the warm, fuzzy feelings we have when all is well with the world? 'We wouldn't,' says consultant psychologist Ingrid Collins, of the London Medical Centre. 'We need the lows to appreciate the highs.'

Here, we reveal what your bad mood is trying to tell you...

YOUR MOOD: **Angry/frustrated**

Having too much to do and not enough time to do it in is guaranteed to result in simmering feelings of anger that boil over into all-out rage when someone unwittingly asks you to do one... more... thing. 'This is a common feeling for a generation of women who feel pressure from all sides,' says Ingrid. 'With growing families, elderly parents, jobs and homes to maintain, women feel they are not only bound by feelings of duty or guilt, but also by time. But you have to remember there's only so much one person can fit into one day.'

TAKE CONTROL In this context, anger is about feeling a lack of control. 'Anger can be put to good use, even if people associate it with destructive behaviour,' says Ingrid. 'It tells us something has to change. What household chore can you delegate (or ditch)? Is there a school or work commitment you can defer? Can you ask for help? There's no shame in getting support – it means you can fulfil all your commitments AND feel happier while you do it.'



YOUR MOOD:

Persistently low

The stress hormone cortisol helps to keep us sharp in reaction to the demands of daily life. However, when we're under pressure, our stress response is constantly activated. 'This can affect the quality of your sleep, as cortisol stops you first falling, then staying, asleep,' says hormone health expert Dr Alyssa Burns-Hill (dralysaburns-hill.com). 'It also affects your memory and lowers your immune system, making you feel as though you're permanently fighting off illness – not a feeling conducive to a jovial mood.'

TAKE CONTROL Alyssa suggests a saliva test (through a CLIA-certified clinic) for an accurate picture of what's going on. 'Many women are relieved when I give them their results, because there's a physical reason for their symptoms – it's not all in their heads.' If you think poor sleep is the root of your problem, she suggests a supplement called 5HTP (found in health food shops). It boosts the happy hormone serotonin, helping you sleep better.

(mariongluckclinic.com). Progesterone, the hormone that peaks at ovulation, may be in decline, which is what makes you feel like you constantly have PMS.

TAKE CONTROL See your GP.

'You may have to give several blood samples over the course of one cycle so your GP can build up a clear picture of your hormonal profile,' says Aru. 'Support the body nutritionally and curb sugar cravings (common with oestrogen dominance) by eating plenty of fish, nuts and greens – organic, if possible. Xenoestrogens, chemicals that imitate the effect of oestrogen in the body, can cause further imbalances. These are found in everyday household products, from shampoo to plastic containers, so use glass containers for food and water.'

YOUR MOOD:

Anxious

The classic signs of anxiety – feeling on edge and irritable – are a common reaction to a never-ending to-do list.

'Even without all the demands on our time, our lives are overstimulating,' says CBT practitioner Anna Hamer. 'We're constantly exposed to light, screens and noise, and our phones are ever-present. Our nervous systems are already at peak capacity and it only takes one small thing, such as a misconstrued email from your boss, for example, to tip us over the edge.'

TAKE CONTROL 'Arm yourself with tools to make sure anxiety never gets the upper hand,' says Anna. 'When you're feeling calm, practise deep breathing from the diaphragm, so that when you're feeling anxious, this comes naturally. Think about the breaths you might take if you were blowing bubbles – breathe in deeply and out steadily. Try using a positive mantra, too – "I'm capable of..., I'm good at..., I'm able to..."'

YOUR MOOD: Sad

Sadness is a normal response to big life events, like a divorce or a death in the family. But in our fast-paced world it can be hard to take the time we need to properly process our feelings. 'If something awful happens, you might react with sadness, anger, disbelief – whatever the emotion is, you must recognise it, allow yourself to feel it, and accept that it's how you're going to feel for a while,' says Ingrid. 'Grieving is a process that takes the time it takes. Acceptance is key.'

TAKE CONTROL When the sadness is less acute, consider what you can do that will help you move on from it – for instance, exercise. 'It doesn't have to be punishing, expensive or time-consuming,' says Alyssa. 'Try walking to or from work. It's a whole-body workout – and even just 10 or 20 minutes gives you the time and space to process your thoughts.'

WHAT MAKES PEOPLE HAPPY?

'Genetics only influence our "set range" for happiness by about 30% to 50%,' says Anna. 'Positive emotions – such as happiness, satisfaction and contentedness – are linked to a person's beliefs and thinking style, which is learned. Our experiences in life are not about reality, as such, but rather reality filtered through our belief system. Those who are happy recognise the good things in their lives. They appreciate positive outcomes and believe they have things to feel glad about. Therapies such as CBT help us to change the way we think so that we feel happier.'

YOUR MOOD:

Perma-PMS

Feeling weepy, moody and super-sensitive could be due to the perimenopause, the term used to describe the period of transition into menopause. 'It can occur five, 10 or even 15 years before the actual menopause and can make you feel PMS-y for more than half the month,' says hormone therapy specialist Dr Aru Arasu, of the Marion Gluck Clinic in London

WHEN IT'S MORE THAN JUST A BAD MOOD

With about one in 10 of us in the UK suffering from anxiety and depression each year*, antidepressants can help. But, according to guidelines, GPs should discuss alternatives – such as talking therapies, diet and lifestyle changes – before prescribing medication in all but the most severe cases. 'People do worry about becoming addicted to antidepressants, but we don't believe they're physically addictive,' says Stephen Buckley, head of information for Mind (mind.org.uk). 'However, the side effects of coming off antidepressants, such as nausea and trembling, can be difficult to manage. GPs need to have an honest conversation with their patients about the pros and cons of this kind of medication. They're not prescribed lightly.'

‘Our businesses are ANIMAL magic!’

Meet the women who make a living from their favourite pets

‘The bond between horse and owner is unique’

Photographer Sue Westwood, 42, from Sale in Greater Manchester, is mum to Josh, 17, and Ellie, eight.

‘As the bride gallops along the beach, she doesn’t care that her designer wedding dress is covered in water and wet sand. Nor does it concern her that her new husband is nowhere to be seen! For her, these photos are every bit as important as the ones she took on her wedding day because they capture the other important relationship in her life – the one with her horse. As for me, being behind the camera is my dream job.

I used to work in the construction industry refurbishing houses. But life changed entirely when, in 2006, we discovered a carbon monoxide leak in our house. Shockingly, it had been slowly poisoning me and my son Josh for three years. We were lucky to survive, but I suffered a brain injury. I had to relearn how to do things that were once second nature, such as read. Although I recovered, I couldn’t return to my old job. I had to find a new way to earn a living.

With the visual side of my brain still intact, I decided to try something creative. I loved photography as a teenager and

wondered if I could turn it into a career. I spent £3,200 on equipment and signed up for a 12-month course. Costing £10,000, it was a big investment, but I wanted to train properly, and my then-husband agreed to support me.

Promoting myself through word-of-mouth, I landed work covering weddings and taking pictures of people’s babies and pets, but I wasn’t earning enough to make a living. I wondered if I needed to specialise – in what, I didn’t know, until I took my camera to the stables. I’d loved horses since I was a child and I’d had my beloved horse, Stollie, since I was 14. On a whim, I persuaded one of the girls, Megan, to bring her prom dress to the yard and pose for photos with her horse.

The final shot was so stunning that I decided to post it on Facebook. Within two hours, I had nine requests from people wanting similar photos! I’d found my niche and, in September 2010, I launched Horse Photographer UK (horsephotographeruk.co.uk), charging £95 for a two-hour shoot, with some clients spending up to £700 on portraits and albums.

Before long, I had requests from people all over the country, so I decided to franchise my business. Five years on, I now have four franchisees who pay

£13,000 to cover a specific region, plus 10% of their turnover.

During shoots, so many women asked if they could wear their wedding dresses that, this year, I launched another branch of my business – The Equestrian Bride. I charge £2,500 to photograph a wedding, which includes a two-hour shoot of the bride and her horse at a later date. The brides never involve their husbands – it’s all about the relationship between them and their horse!

A SPECIAL PRIVILEGE

Of course, there’s always a risk of disaster. One client was bucked off her horse, while another saw hers have an “accident” on her wedding dress. Luckily, people expect such mishaps, but there have been heartbreaking moments, too. One client wanted a photo session with her horse who was being put down the following day – it was a privilege to give her a lasting memento of their bond.

These days, I work until midnight seven days a week – either on shoots or supporting my franchisees – but I feel so lucky that my passion for horses led me to my dream job. ➡

SUE’S TIPS

- Specialise – find your niche and stick with it.
- Go the extra mile – be prepared to work seven days a week to get your business started.
- Use social media to target your market.

‘Brides love a lasting
memento of the special
bond with their horse’





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'I was looking for a cure for my own pet'

Lizzie Bengé, 31, from Maidstone, Kent, runs Healing Paws, which offers remedial massage to dogs.

My dogs Vinnie and Lola are my world. So when Vinnie, a Parson Russell terrier, developed a limp at just one year old, I was obviously concerned. I took him to the vet and was stunned to hear that, despite his young age, they could only offer him painkillers, with the possibility of surgery at some point in the future.

As a former gymnast, I knew that if Vinnie was human, he'd be offered physiotherapy for his limp before anyone even considered surgery. I couldn't understand why the rules weren't the same for dogs.

I started searching for other options online. It was then I stumbled upon a two-year course at the Institute of Complementary Animal Therapies in Devon. At £2,000, it wasn't cheap, but I could do it around my job in personal finance. Putting the first payment of

£450 on my credit card and vowing to save up for the rest, I signed up.

In March 2008 I took some time off work to travel down to Devon for the first part of the course. Laying Vinnie down on the floor as instructed, and massaging his legs, he looked up at me as if to say, "What on earth are you doing?!" But he soon relaxed into it. Over the course of five days, I learned about different massage techniques to perform on animals and, despite Vinnie's initial reticence, as I practised on him, his limp seemed to improve.

In the months that followed, I learned

about the anatomy of dogs and how remedial massage – the manipulation of the muscles, tendons and ligaments – can improve their range

of movement. Although it was tricky juggling my mounting workload with my full-time job, I loved what I was learning. Then, for my final assignment, I had to develop a business plan and logo for a pet massage company. A friend, who's a graphic designer, helped me create a

website and branding and, by the time I'd finished, I had a ready-made company. Still, it wasn't until my husband, Alex, suggested I make a go of it that I found the confidence to take the plunge.

I already had a network of canine clients, which I'd had to find as part of my coursework, so I began to approach them – offering 85-minute sessions for £60 during my weekends, with the option of a follow-up appointment for a further £47. Soon, I found myself treating all kinds of dogs, from canine amputees to injured working dogs. Only one has behaved aggressively towards me, and it didn't last very long. Most love the feeling of being massaged – one Doberman, who I treat regularly, runs to her duvet the minute she sees me and lays on her side, waiting for me to start!

Although I started out by fitting in appointments around my job, three years after my course had ended, I was so busy that I decided to quit personal finance to massage dogs full-time. I officially launched Healing Paws (healingpaws.co.uk), along with a sister business, Leading Paws, offering

dog walking, pet sitting and training sessions, too. Before long, I was so busy that I sub-contracted some of my work out to three women, who agreed to pay me 20% of their earnings.

Now I see about 20 dogs a week. There's nothing more satisfying than when an owner tells me their dog has walked up the stairs or jumped up on the sofa for the first time in years.

I tend to start by

working on their necks, which relaxes them, before moving on to problem areas. Many people are sceptical about remedial massage at first, but owners soon see how effective it can be.

This job was never part of my plan, but I couldn't be happier about how it's worked out. Dogs are amazing animals and I feel privileged to be able to spend every day working with them.' ➔

'There's nothing more satisfying than improving a dog's mobility'

LIZZIE'S TIPS

- Find a good accountant – once you do, hold on to them.
- Be there for clients – many owners depend on me, so I'll always find time for them.
- Be prepared to graft – I missed out on a social life for a long time, while juggling my new business with work, but I love what I do.



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ABI'S TIPS

- Do your research – when designing my hotel, I chose items cats need rather than things that are aesthetically pleasing but of no interest to them.
- Don't cut corners – buy quality items that will look good and last.
- Enjoy it – I don't do this for the money, I do it because I love it.

'I cater for a cat's every whim'

Abi Purser, 40, from Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, and her husband Matt, 44, have three children, Millie, 21, Harry, eight, and Fred, six.

After treating my guests to a delicious, home-cooked meal, I ensure the room is the perfect temperature before performing a turn-down service with treats and milk. Some people may think it's crazy to provide a cat with five-star luxury like this, but I want every single one of my furry guests to love their stay at my cat hotel.

I was destined to work with animals. As a child I loved to rescue injured birds, and I went on to work in the saddlery industry – supplying saddles to the British Equestrian Team. But it wasn't until I needed to find a cattery for my cat, Norman, in 2006, that I considered a career change. We were going on holiday and wanted somewhere where Norman would feel at home, but we ended up viewing 15 old-fashioned, smelly places before we found one we actually liked.

Determined to see if I could do better, I started designing a modern cat hotel we could install at the back of our

garden using materials that could easily be kept clean to prevent odour, such as porcelain tiles and glass.

It took 18 months for the planning application to be approved. During that time, I left my job to have my son, Harry and, between nappy changes and feeds, funded the project by selling belongings on eBay and borrowing money from my mum. I researched cat behaviour, and decided each "suite" would provide their home comforts, from a view of trees and birds, to somewhere warm to sleep and a place to hide if they felt anxious. By the time we received permission to build the 10m x 5m structure, my plan was in place, and I'd raised the £40,000 I needed to turn my vision into a reality.

'I can't believe I get paid to look after animals, plus I have flexible hours'

per night for a suite, with the option of an all-inclusive package for £6 extra per night, including home-cooked food, grooming and a bedtime service, plus milk and cat treats. My first guest was a British shorthair, who loved cuddles.

By then, I'd had another son, Fred, and I could drop both boys at nursery

before spending the day cleaning

the suites, feeding and playing with the cats. I couldn't believe I was getting paid to look after animals, and the flexible hours meant that I never missed a school play or sports day.

That first Christmas I had around 500 enquiries, but because I only have six rooms, I couldn't meet the demand, so I set up franchises. My first franchisee was one of my customers, Gill, and now I have six others, with two more hotels in the pipeline. Each franchisee pays me from £4,300 per year in return for training and support. I also deal with all the design, planning and bureaucracy, so they can focus on the cats.

The happiness of the cats is my main concern, so I'll customise their suites at their owner's request. One guest bought a clock along because its noise soothed his pet; another time, a poorly cat was left with me because her owners had an emergency, and I fed her from a syringe in four-hour shifts throughout the night.

For me, staying in a hotel means visiting somewhere that seems nicer than my own home, where I'm well looked after, which is why I'm determined that my feline guests feel the same way about staying here.'

‘I found the key to my little girl’s world’

When doctors told Arabella Carter-Johnson that her daughter had autism, they painted a bleak outlook. But Arabella chose to believe in a different future for her child

Arabella Carter-Johnson, 35, husband P-J, 45, and their daughter, Iris, now six, live in Market Harborough, Leicestershire.

Last summer, Iris and I sat on the sofa with a big, heavy book on our laps, filled with photographs. Inside were pictures of bike rides, paintings and Iris playing with her devoted cat in the snow. Each picture was a window into her world – showing the wonderful things she’d achieved and how much fun we’ve had together.

It was three years since my husband P-J and I had been told that our daughter had autism spectrum disorder. The doctor had drawn a line on a piece of paper to represent the spectrum, making a mark close to the severe end to show where our two-year-old fell on it. There were therapies, he said, but in his opinion, “very few of them work”.

P-J and I first met at a party when I was 18. We travelled the world, lived in France and renovated a house in rural Leicestershire. Iris, our only child, was born 10 years after we met. Through my healthy pregnancy, we dreamed of our first-born making dens and playing with friends in the countryside, just as I’d done.

During her first year, Iris hit her milestones and began to babble like

other babies. But being a mum simply wasn’t what I’d expected. While other parents emerged from the chaotic newborn days, we were stuck there. Toddler groups were torture, as Iris would scream non-stop, and bedtime was even harder. She would fight sleep for hours every night. After her first birthday, her behaviour got worse and Iris seemed to withdraw into her own world.

One morning, I was working on my computer while Iris played on the floor beside me. She was staring at books with an unblinking focus and

I felt proud that she seemed to have the concentration of a six-year-old. Then it dawned on me that Iris wasn’t six, she was a baby. Her speech had stopped completely and we couldn’t leave the house without her having a meltdown. I knew in that moment that this silent focus, this detachment from me and everyone else around her, wasn’t right.

I started looking online for answers and, a few months before we saw the doctor, I was pretty sure I’d found them. Though his diagnosis was unbearably sad, I wasn’t surprised. Actually, I was



Feature: Mel Hunter Main photo: Sarah Vivienne Photography

angry. The doctor told us that Iris “may never” learn to talk, and I hated his negativity. I couldn’t understand why he couldn’t have just said “she may learn”. I vowed to prove him wrong.

It wasn’t quite so simple, of course. Reading everything I could find on autism, I soon realised there were no quick fixes. Almost anything could provoke a meltdown – the clatter of the dishwasher or someone waving a toy in her face. Unable to cope with the noisy, complicated world, Iris began to shut it out – and she became almost totally silent. There was no let-up at night, and surviving on a few hours sleep soon became our norm. I worried that P-J and I were drifting apart, as we struggled to cope with Iris’s unpredictable behaviour. It was hard seeing our daughter locked in her mostly silent world.

Amid the challenges, Iris showed fleeting moments of joy – the feeling of water on her hands, the sound of a piano, an old tree stump. Along with regular sessions with a therapist, these small pleasures became the backbone of our daily routine. We encouraged Iris to play outside, bought a piano and turned our home into an obstacle course of sand tables and ball pits – all designed to encourage interaction.

When Iris turned three, we attempted to enrol her at pre-school, but it was such a disaster that I decided to home-school her, fitting it in around my job as a wedding photographer.

I knew that educating Iris would be difficult if I couldn’t find a way to help her to communicate more. She’d always loved drawing, so one day, I taped some old wallpaper lining paper to our table and left some paints and brushes for her to use, hoping that she might have some fun. As I looked on, something



‘With Thula the cat by her side, Iris began to grow into a confident girl’

wonderful happened. She picked up a paintbrush and soon the paper was a glorious riot of colour.

Over the next few days, Iris kept on painting. Her artwork was wonderful, with water, nature and the weather all proving popular themes. But more wonderful still was the way her paintings became another key into her world. When she was painting, Iris was calm, and, once finished, she’d lead P-J by the hand to show off her artwork. It brought the three of us closer than ever.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

Soon after, we got a kitten named Thula, and her bond with Iris was instant. We chose a Maine Coon, a breed known for its loving and loyal nature, and Thula was soon a much-loved member of our family. When Iris woke in the night, Thula was there to settle her; when she refused to get into the bath, Thula would show her how; and, when Iris began to paint, Thula would sit at the corner of the table, watching.

With Thula by her side, Iris began to grow into a confident girl. We watched with wonder as she began to communicate with Thula – and gradually with us, too.

With Iris settled for the first time in her life, P-J suggested we show her artwork to a wider audience. We wondered if it could help show autism in a more positive light, and give other families hope, too. Still, nothing could have prepared me for what happened next.

We set up a Facebook page all about Iris’s work, including pictures of her paintings. As soon as it went public, it became clear that we weren’t the only ones who thought our daughter was talented. Our Facebook following grew, and art collectors, agents and other parents of autistic children got in touch. We were half joking when we wondered if we could sell her paintings to help fund her various therapies, but before long, we were selling prints of her work for anything from £30 to £100.

Many of the thousands of emails we’ve received have moved me to tears. But the comfort isn’t one-sided. I have a virtual community of like-minded friends who’ve been there for me when I needed it.

It’s the reason that, today, our world is a place filled with light and hope rather than darkness and despair – and I’ve been led along this journey by Iris. I take her lead each day on what she feels able to do. She still struggles around other children, so we continue to home-school her, but we hope that she’ll be able to live independently one day.

I’ve written a book about our journey and I like to think her story is proof that there is hope for people with autism. It’s not inferior or wrong, it is simply a different way of seeing the world. Don’t let anyone say a child with autism will “never” do something. There’s no such thing as “never” – they just haven’t achieved it yet.’

• *Arabella’s book, Iris Grace (Michael Joseph, £18.99), is out now*



Two of Iris’s amazing paintings



Coming up roses

Thought a rose scent was old-fashioned? Think again! It's the latest 'it' ingredient in fragrance, as these new bottles show...

IF YOU LIKE A FEMININE, MODERN FLORAL

Elie Saab Rose Couture EDT (from £34 for 30ml). Orange blossom, peony and rose, blended together with vanilla, sandalwood and patchouli. Beautiful.



IF YOU LIKE A ROSE-BASED, WOODY SPRITZ

Estée Lauder Modern Muse Eau de Rouge EDT (from £36 for 30ml). Rose with an instant hit of raspberry and pink pepper, jasmine, vetiver and musk at the base. Gorgeous!

IF YOU LIKE FLORAL AND MUSKY NOTES

Lancôme La Vie Est Belle Florale EDT (from £49 for 50ml). If you like the original, you'll love this musky floral version. Rose is at its heart, with jasmine and magnolia, and it dries with a beautiful mix of amber, patchouli and musk.



Beautiful you

**IF YOU LIKE
A FRESH FRAGRANCE**

Marc Jacobs Daisy Dream Blush Edition EDT (£59 for 75ml). On the first spritz, you're hit with delightful floral notes of violet, rose, lily of the valley and freesia, with a vetiver and musk base.

**IF YOU LIKE
A SENSUAL, WOODY TOUCH**

Michael Kors Sexy Sunset EDP (from £39 for 30ml). Our favourite fragrance from this house so far opens with freesia and blackcurrant, followed by delightful florals and a vanilla and woody base.

**IF YOU LIKE
AN EVERYDAY
BOUQUET**

Weleda Jardin de Vie Rose Eau Naturelle Parfumée (£19.95 for 50ml, from 1 April). A rose spritz, lighter than an eau de toilette. Perfect for everyday use.

**IF YOU LIKE
A REAL ROSY SCENT**

Giorgio Armani Si Rose Signature (£69.50 for 50ml, from 6 March). A sophisticated spritz with rose at its heart. Freesia, iris and blackcurrant hit your nose first, while vanilla and musk linger. Fabulous!

For where to buy, see page 160

Haircuts to transform...

Celebrity hairdresser Richard Ward, responsible for Kate Middleton's beautiful



Short & versatile

Tania Curtis, 47, from Norwich, is a sales executive.



RICHARD'S TRICKS...

- Tania's previous colour was washing out her complexion. To match her warm colouring, brighter highlights were mixed with slices of darker caramel tones – a much more natural look.
- Many women opt for longer hair for versatility, but end up wearing it down with no shape to it. A shorter style works much better for Tania's fine hair and face shape. A cut above the jawline can be slimming for the face. Tania has a natural wave, so her new cut looks fabulous left to dry or blow-dried.



SUPER SLEEK

For smoothness and shine, put a tiny bit of serum on to damp hair before blow-drying. Use the nozzle on the end of your hairdryer to direct the airflow downwards for a sleek finish.



VOLUME & TEXTURE

Apply a tangerine-size ball of mousse to damp hair and scrunch-dry using a diffuser on a low setting.

from dull to DIVINE!

wedding hairstyle, shows us what the right cut and colour can do



Tania wears: Sweater, Uniqlo Bethany wears: Top, RJR, John Rocha at Debenhams

Bespoke balayage

Bethany Tang, 37, from London, works in PR.



RICHARD'S TRICKS...

- Bethany was bored of her block colour, and was looking for something fresh and modern. Balayage is hot on the A-list circuit right now – here, some lighter, brighter pieces were painted through Bethany's mid-lengths to the ends, adding youthful texture.
- A longer style is best for Bethany, to suit her round face. Choppy layers, and an accentuated fringe cut at an angle to soften her look, complement her new colour beautifully.



WHAT IS BALAYAGE?

Balayage is a free-hand highlighting technique that works on blondes and brunettes. The colourist paints on the colour – rather than using a cap or foils – for a softer, more natural look. As the colour doesn't reach the roots, there isn't any noticeable regrowth, so it's ideal for busy women looking for a low-maintenance hair colour. ➔





Bobs are back

Claire Hallett, 42, from Herne Bay, Kent, is an administrator for an estate agent.



RICHARD'S TRICKS...

- A mixture of highlights and lowlights softened Claire's colour, with a semi-permanent tint to hide previous root regrowth for a more natural effect.

- Claire's straight, fine hair was doing nothing for her. By taking the length just below her chin and graduating the back, it creates the illusion of a much thicker style.



WILL YOU SUIT A BOB?

Yes! All women suit bobs. Your hairdresser will adjust the length to suit your face shape. For example, if you have a rounder face, a long bob is ideal.





Layered illusion

Teresa Havell, 56, from Portsmouth, is a registrar and reflexologist.



BEFORE

RICHARD'S TRICKS...

- Teresa suffers from alopecia areata (hair loss) and was overcompensating for it by wearing her hair long. But the trick to making the best of fine or thinning hair is style.
- Look what a shorter cut with long layers can do! Teresa's new hairdo appears much fuller and oozes volume, bounce and movement.



FINE & FABULOUS

If you suffer from hair loss, avoid putting chemicals on your hair, and embrace the grey. Be inspired by Teresa's great new look. ➔



WOULD YOU LIKE THE RICHARD WARD EXPERIENCE?

Book your appointment at the Richard Ward Hair and Metrospa, Sloane Square, London, by visiting richardward.com, or by calling 020 7730 1222.

12 salon-worthy styling secrets

Our beauty editor's pick of the best new hair products...

BEST FOR *Blondes or waves*



Charles Worthington Instant Root Concealer Powder (£14.99, from 1 March, Boots). Touch-up powder to cover roots and greys. Its natural finish prolongs time between visits to the salon. Genius!



Maria Nila Salty Cream (£19, Sally). Think of this as a sea salt spray with light hold. Great for naturally wavy hair like Tania's – for days when you just want to wash, apply and go natural.



Pro:voke Touch of Silver Intensive Keratin Treatment Shot (£6.99 for 3, Boots). Keep your blonde hair healthy and hydrated with these clever little treatments. You only leave it on for 3 to 5 minutes, so even the busiest of women have no excuse!

BEST FOR *Coloured hair*



Pureology Smooth Perfection Shampoo (£16) and Conditioner (£20, both Look Fantastic). This fab duo will protect your colour with their built-in heat protection – plus there's no nasty sulphates.



Richard Ward The Chelsea Collection 10-in-1 Multi-Tasking Styling Spritz (£5.99, Waitrose). Time-poor mums like Bethany will love this multitasking argan oil spray. Spritz on for heat protection, volume and gloss.



ghd Atlantic Jade Styler (£129, from 1 April). Simply the best at creating curls that make balayage colour come alive. Now available in limited-edition spring colours.



BEST FOR *Dry hair*



Tigi S-Factor Health Factor Shampoo (£14.95) and Conditioner (£15.95, Feel Unique). Get the basics right with targeted cleansing products for your hair's needs and you'll notice a huge difference. Dry or over-processed hair needs a moisture-boosting formula like this fab duo.



Oooh That's Nice Kent Hairbrush (£12.50, Boots). We all want snag-free brushing to prevent breakage, especially if our hair is dry. This brush moulds to individual head shapes and is gentle on sensitive scalps. Great for all the family!



Aussie 3 Minute Miracle Moisture (£4.99). The brand's 'hero' mask is now available for parched hair. Use at least once a week.

BEST FOR *Fine or thinning hair*

Plantur 39 Phyto-Caffeine Shampoo (£8.99, Boots). Decreased oestrogen levels before and after the menopause can lead to thinning hair. This targeted caffeine formula is formulated for these difficult stages.



Viviscal Women's Maximum Strength (from £49.95 for a one-month supply). From stress to menopause and good old genetics, all sorts of factors have an effect on your hair. If breakage, thinning, shedding or alopecia are causing you distress, introduce these supplements into your life. They're worth every penny!



Swell Ultimate Protect & Renew Serum (£20, Marks & Spencer). Avoid silicone-based styling products that'll weigh your hair down. This natural formula will smooth the cuticle just as well, keeping frizz under control while promoting shine.



My hair
is my
crowning
glory.

Always a big part of my look.
So when my crown began to slip
and my hair began to thin, panic set in.
Then I found out I could still be in control.
I could help my crown stay mine.

As a woman your hair is a big part of you. It shapes how you look and how you feel. So when you start to lose it, it can also feel like you're losing a part of yourself. Regaine for Women Foam contains Minoxidil and is the only clinically proven women's foam to regrow hair. Helping you once again, feel like you.

Learn more about female pattern hair loss
www.regaine.co.uk/women



Regaine® for Women Once a Day Scalp Foam 5% w/w Cutaneous Foam is for female pattern hair loss. Contains Minoxidil. Always Read the Label.



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let's feel good

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Beauty for grown-ups

Whip up a beauty

One of the things that's stayed with me since my A level chemistry days is that hairspray and Bunsen burners don't mix... And today, my enthusiasm for avoiding chemicals in my beauty products is increasing. I often concoct cosmetic treats in my kitchen using natural ingredients as, this way, you can tailor them to suit your skin – and save money. Here are some of my favourites...

Night-time cleanser

Cleansing is a two-stage process: the first removes make-up, dirt from pollution and sebum; the second cleans your face.

MAKE IT Castor oil is a great cleanser, but it is astringent so should never be used neat on your skin. Mix it with a nourishing oil, such as avocado or olive. Place the oils in a clean bottle and shake. Pour into your hand, warm between your palms, and massage into your face. Remove with a warm, damp flannel. Try the following ratios: 1 part cold-pressed virgin castor oil to 6 parts nourishing oil for dry/mature skin; 1:4 for combination skin; 1:3 for oily skin.

The second cleanse

MAKE IT For the ultimate glow, blend half a kiwi with 1tbsp natural probiotic yoghurt and 1tbsp raw honey. Massage into the face, neck and décolletage and leave for 2 minutes. Remove with a warm, wet flannel. Kiwi contains high levels of vitamin C, which helps to stimulate collagen production, and the lactic acid in the yoghurt acts as a natural exfoliator. Plus, honey is full of antioxidants – the darker the colour, the more potent it will be.

A handheld blender will be your best friend, but you can also use a fork and a bowl.

Radiance face mask

MAKE IT Mash a ripe banana and mix with 1tbsp raw or manuka honey. Add a little lemon juice, as it contains natural alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs), which help to exfoliate and brighten the skin. Experiment with the quantity you use – try 3 or 4 drops for dry skin; 5 to 7 drops for normal skin; and 8 to 10 drops for oily skin. Apply to the skin, avoiding the eye area, and leave for 10 to 15 minutes. First, gently wipe off the excess with tissue, then use a tepid, damp flannel. Honey is a natural humectant, so it locks moisture into the skin, while the banana will nourish and hydrate.

treat!

Beauty expert Kazia Pelka shares her recipes for home-made cosmetics to suit every need and skin type



Hand and nail conditioner

MAKE IT Fold 1tbsp lemon juice into 2tbsp natural brown sugar using a metal spoon. Add a few drops of water. Rub a little coconut oil into your nails and cuticles before massaging the sugar and lemon mix into your hands. Leave for 10 minutes, then rinse off with warm water. Brown sugar contains glycolic acid which, along with the lemon juice, is a natural exfoliant, resulting in softer, younger-looking hands.



It's best to use organic ingredients, as they're much more gentle on your skin.

Hair and scalp mask

MAKE IT Blend the flesh of 1 avocado with 1tbsp honey and 1 egg yolk. Apply to your hair and scalp and leave for 20 minutes.

To maximise the effects, wrap your hair in clingfilm. Honey has natural antibacterial properties, so it heals and nourishes – plus it retains moisture. The avocado is a great treatment for dry hair, providing proteins and amino acids to soothe a dry, itchy scalp.



Strawberry and mint foot scrub 'n' soak

MAKE IT Gather the following ingredients: 2 strawberries, a small bunch of mint, 3tbsp Epsom salts and 1tbsp coconut oil. Blend or mash together the strawberries and mint, then add the rest of the ingredients. Scrub your feet thoroughly with the mixture over a plastic foot bath, paying particular attention to your heels and any other areas of hard skin. Add warm water to make a foot bath and soak for 10 minutes. This is messy, but worth it. The magnesium in the salts is believed to help produce mood-enhancing serotonin, while the salicylic acid from the strawberries helps remove dead skin. Not only that – it smells great, too!



Love your hair again

Hair styling, colour treatments, poor diet and hormonal changes can all have an impact on our hair.

Hairfollic® is based on the latest nutritional research to provide biotin, selenium and zinc which help to maintain normal hair, plus specific amino acids and Marine Collagen.



Hairfollic® contains Tricologic™ – an exclusive Biomarine complex with Grape Seed and Collagen extracts.



Also Available
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from **Britain's No.1 Vitamin Company***

*Nielsen GB ScanTrack Total Coverage Value Sales 52 w/e25 April 2015.

From  Tesco, Holland & Barrett,
pharmacies, health stores and www.hairfollic.com.


**Britain's No.1
supplements***




VITABIOTICS
SCIENCE OF HEALTHY LIVING

Beauty
trend

Blue-eyed beauties

Bold make-up colours are making a big comeback this spring and blue, in particular, is big news. From hues of marine teals through to smouldering navy shades, the new way to wear blue is around the eyes for a pop of colour. It'll freshen up your make-up routine and brighten the whites of your eyes – anti-ageing in an instant!



Head-to-toe treats from our beauty editor
SABINE WIESEL



ON THE LIDS...

Whether you go for a simple wash of colour or an all-out smoky eye, stick to barely there make-up elsewhere – let your eyes do the talking!

I love... 1 Clinique Lid Pop in Surf Pop (£15, from 18 March)

2 Bourjois Quad Smoky Stories Eyeshadow Palette in E-Blue-Issant No11 (£7.99, Boots)

ON THE LINE...

Take the colour all around the upper and lower lash lines and smudge. Gorgeous!

I love... 3 Clarins Waterproof Eye Liner Pencil in Aquatic Green (£17, online exclusive)

4 Delilah Gel Line Gel Eye Liner in Ink (£22)

ON THE LASHES...

Match your lids or liner with blue on the lashes, or simply wear on its own.

I love... 5 Benefit they're Real! Mascara in Beyond Blue (£19.50)



BEAUTY SOS



Q I'm trying to grow my hair, but am addicted to my straightening irons, so the ends are looking frazzled. Shall I go for the chop or are there any treatments worth trying?

Linda Armstrong, Portsmouth

A I recently tried the new ghd Advanced Split End Therapy (£19.95), and think it's perfect for your hair! It's activated by heat so, after washing, apply it to your dry ends, blow-dry, then use your irons. It's super-nourishing.

Try it, use it, love it!

20% OFF BALANCE ME SKINCARE

This month, Balance Me is offering readers an exclusive 20% off its range of multi award-winning natural skincare ranges. Blended with pure botanical and essential oils, its aromatherapy-inspired products solve skin concerns without creating others. Awaken your eyes with the new Tinted Wonder Eye Cream (£20) – its universal tint conceals shadows while reducing fine lines and puffiness. Partner this with the Restore and Replenish Cream Cleanser (£18) and Face Cream (£40), which have a natural peptide complex to boost skin's collagen production and radiance. Happy shopping!



Get your 20% discount on all Balance Me skincare products by entering PRIMA20 at the balanceme.co.uk checkout from 3 March to 7 April 2016.*

TERMS & CONDITIONS *Only available at balanceme.co.uk. Offer cannot be exchanged for cash. One transaction only. Valid from 3 March until midnight, 7 April 2016. Only one code can be used per transaction. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or Balance Me Loyalty codes. Customer must be logged into account prior to adding items to basket.



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So what! **MOVE ALL YOU WANT.**



Absorbs leaks & odours in seconds.
Always Discreet Liners & Pads.

Always Discreet Liners & Pads have
an 'ultra' thin absorbent core that turns liquid into gel.
So they're not only 'ultra' thin, they're super absorbent too.

Also available in Underwear.

Winner Bladder Weakness Category. Survey of 11,586 people in UK & ROI by TNS.
Always Discreet Pads and Liners.



Younger, fitter, LEANER...

LET'S GET STARTED!

Tune in to the latest anti-ageing food and fitness plan from our favourite expert, Rick Hay – and check out who's loving it!

Weight-loss regimes, endless gym slogs and the quest for skinny are so over. The new focus is on looking – and feeling – younger for longer, with an easy eating plan rich in brightly coloured, sexily spiced foods, plus a simple fitness regime that's a daily blast of intense, over-in-minutes moves. Trust us, this is a combo that's guaranteed to show results fast and, if it's your aim, to lose those stubborn pounds!

You'll be hooked to this healthy new lifestyle in 12 weeks, but we reckon just trying it for a week or two will show you how good you could be looking and

feeling. Actress Sarah Parish tells us she's been loving it for a few months now and really notices the difference. Why not give it a try?

THE SECRETS BEHIND THE PLAN...

'It's all about targeting ageing and fitness at a cellular level, using nutrient-dense meals, snacks, supplements and high-intensity training,' says nutritionist Rick Hay. If it sounds daunting, don't fret – it's easier than you think. 'All the foods, herbs and spices improve digestion while helping to control cravings and feelings of fullness.' For the science that rocks the plan, read on to see what you'll be doing and why...

FRUIT SMOOTHIES



**'I went from
exhausted to
energetic'**

Sarah Parish



TURN THE PAGE FOR YOUR NEW ANTI-AGEING MEAL PLAN ➔



LEMON BLAST

BERRY SMOOTHIE

Each antioxidant-rich, low GI meal or snack will keep blood sugars stable and cravings to a minimum

NURTURING YOUR TELOMERES



Telomeres are the little tips at the ends of our chromosomes that shorten as we age.

'The longer they are, the better,' says Rick. 'Long, healthy telomeres appear to be key to slowing down the ageing process.' Here are some foods and nutrients that may help:

- **Vitamin D-rich foods**, such as fish and eggs, are telomere protectors.
- **High folate foods**, such as lentils and spinach, promote telomere health.
- **Antioxidant superfoods**, such as berries, wheatgrass, turmeric, green tea and organic cacao, are associated with long telomeres.
- **Magnesium-rich foods**, such as dark leafy greens, nuts, seeds, avocados, bananas and figs, are believed to influence telomere length by helping repair DNA.
- **Spices**, such as cayenne and chilli, improve digestion and curb cravings.

BEFORE BREAKFAST

Kick-start your daily digestion with...

- **Lemon blast** Add the juice of half a lemon and a few slices to half a glass of warm, filtered water. Zesty and refreshing, it helps with fat metabolism.

BREAKFAST

Have some protein, to help with weight management, plus some carbs for energy and brain focus. Choose from...

- **Porridge with berries** Add 2-3tsp of fresh or frozen berries to a small bowl of porridge with a dollop of unsweetened, organic yoghurt. Berries help with fat burning, while oats help to keep blood sugar levels stable, which helps with weight loss and mood.
- **Eggs, your way** Scramble, poach or boil 2 organic or free-range eggs. Serve with 1 piece of rye or wholegrain toast and organic butter or olive oil margarine. The perfect protein and carb duo.
- **Banana or berry smoothie** Blend 250ml rice or almond milk with 1 banana or a cup of berries, plus a few almonds. Turbo-charge your shake by adding 1 scoop of plant-based protein. A shake like this can be used as a meal

replacement, as it is high in protein and amino acids that help keep you feeling fuller for longer! **TRY** *Sunwarrior (Natural, Vanilla or Chocolate)*, £24.99 for 500g, nutricentre.com

MID-MORNING SNACK

Eating every few hours helps to control portion size, blood sugar levels and cravings. Choose from...

- **Berry bowl** Add berries of your choice to a small bowl with a few almonds and some organic unsweetened yoghurt, if you like.
- **Apple with a few almonds** This is an easy carb plus protein snack.
- **Yummy yoghurt** Drizzle honey over unsweetened natural or Greek-style yoghurt and add a fig.

BEFORE LUNCH & DINNER

The perfect time to rev things up with a super supplement.

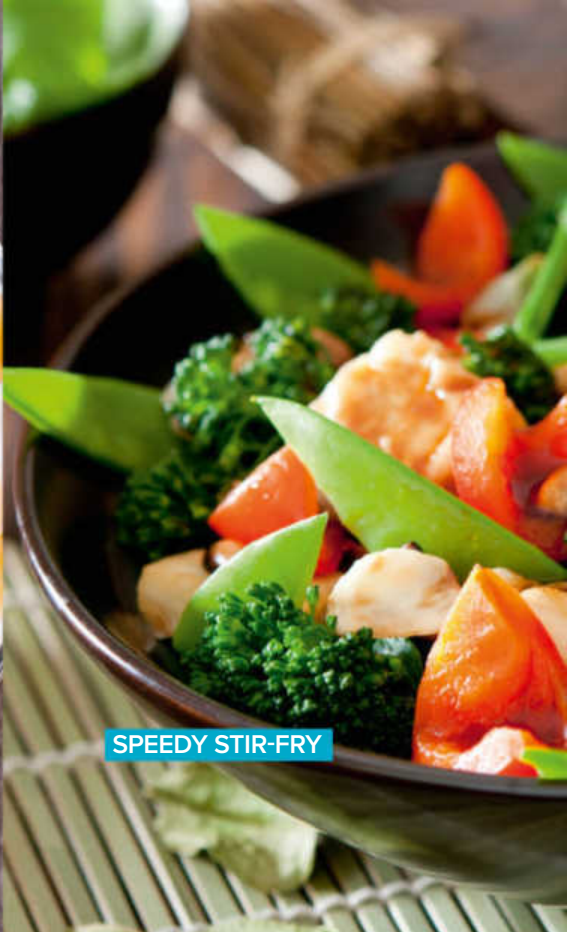
- **Spirulina or Super Green Boost** You can take up to six tablets a day to help control feelings of fullness and portion sizes. **TRY** *Synergy Natural Spirulina*, £8.95 for 100 tablets, xynergy.co.uk



PORRIDGE WITH BERRIES



YUMMY YOGHURT



SPEEDY STIR-FRY

LUNCH

Forget sandwiches – there are lots of healthier options, such as a great soup or salad (both are handy as a packed lunch) or, if you're pushed for time, an easy shake. Choose from...

- **Healthy green soup** Add a cup of broccoli, a cup of cauliflower and half a cup of green beans to 300ml water. Season with fat-burning thermogenic spices, such as black pepper, cayenne, garlic or chilli, and simmer until the vegetables are tender.
- **Protein-packed salad** Grill 150g salmon, tofu or tempeh. Add a cup of leafy greens to a bowl and drizzle over olive oil and balsamic vinegar dressing. Serve the salmon, tofu or tempeh on top. This delicious protein-based meal is high in antioxidants and healthy omegas, which help improve mood and skin.
- **Berry burst** Blend 250ml rice milk with 1 cup each of berries (fresh or frozen) and leafy greens, 1tbsp pumpkin seeds and 8 almonds. Again, you can turbo-charge your smoothie with 1 scoop of plant-based protein (as before). You can use this as a meal replacement, but only for one or two meals a day – not all three!

MID-AFTERNOON SNACK

Just when you feel you might flag, along comes another pick-me-up. Choose from...

- **Nutty crispbread** Spread almond or cashew butter on to 1 or 2 crispbreads. Why not enjoy with a cup of green tea?
- **Veggie dip** Slice carrots and celery into sticks and dip into 50g houmous – a really juicy and handy little snack to eat at your desk at work.
- **Avocado snack** Eat a couple of crispbreads with some creamy mashed avocado on top. Not keen on avocado? Go for ricotta cheese instead.

DINNER

Most of us want quick and easy evening meals that are healthy and flavoursome. Don't forget to take your spirulina beforehand. Choose from...

- **Fast grill** Grill a small piece (150g or less) of tuna, tofu, tempeh or Quorn

together with 1 or 2 cups of steamed green vegetables of your choice. Dress the vegetables with a little olive oil and garlic, sea salt or black pepper.

- **Easy omelette** Whisk up 2 or 3 organic or free-range eggs to make a delicious omelette. Season with chilli or cayenne for thermogenic fat-burning properties and serve with a cup of leafy greens.
- **Speedy stir-fry** Take a cupful of green vegetables and cauliflower florets and stir-fry with 100-150g of tuna, tofu or tempeh. Season with those thermogenic spices again – chilli or cayenne – and serve with half a cup of brown rice.

AFTER DINNER

Keeping blood sugars stable doesn't mean you can't enjoy dessert. TRY...

- **Sweet fruit plate** Warm 2 or 3 dates or prunes and serve with a splash of unsweetened rice or almond milk.

BEFORE BED

Treat yourself to a soothing drink. TRY...

- **Late-night tea** Brew a delicious cup of herbal tea. Choose calming varieties, such as chamomile, lemon or valerian.

YOUR NEW FITNESS ROUTINE

High-intensity interval training (HIIT) sounds scary, but it only takes a few seconds and helps you burn fat

Slot the following exercises into your routine three to four times a week. On other days, try a different activity, such as swimming, cycling or walking. You can bring HIIT into your walk, too. Do it by walking quickly for 1 minute, then slower for 30 seconds, and repeat during your walk.

● **Warm up: 1-minute cardio** Start by walking on the spot before taking it into a jog. After 30 seconds, start to increase the intensity, going as fast as you can. Only take your feet off the floor by a couple of inches and move your arms fast, too, until you hit the 1-minute mark.



YOUR HIIT CIRCUIT

Do each exercise in the circuit intensely for 20 seconds and then slowly for 40 seconds, except for the plank – this should be held for 20 seconds and relaxed for 40 seconds. Each individual exercise should be done for 1 minute. If you're a beginner, complete the circuit once or twice. If you're intermediate, complete it 2 or 3 times. And if you're advanced, 3 or 4 times.

1 Speed squats Stand with your feet hip-width apart and lower the hips down in a squat, as if you're sitting on a low chair, sticking out your bottom behind you. Move quickly back to a standing position and repeat. As you lower your body, keep arms straight but raise them to be parallel with the floor as you squat. Keep the timing steady.

2 The plank (top right) Start by getting into a push-up position. The key here is to engage

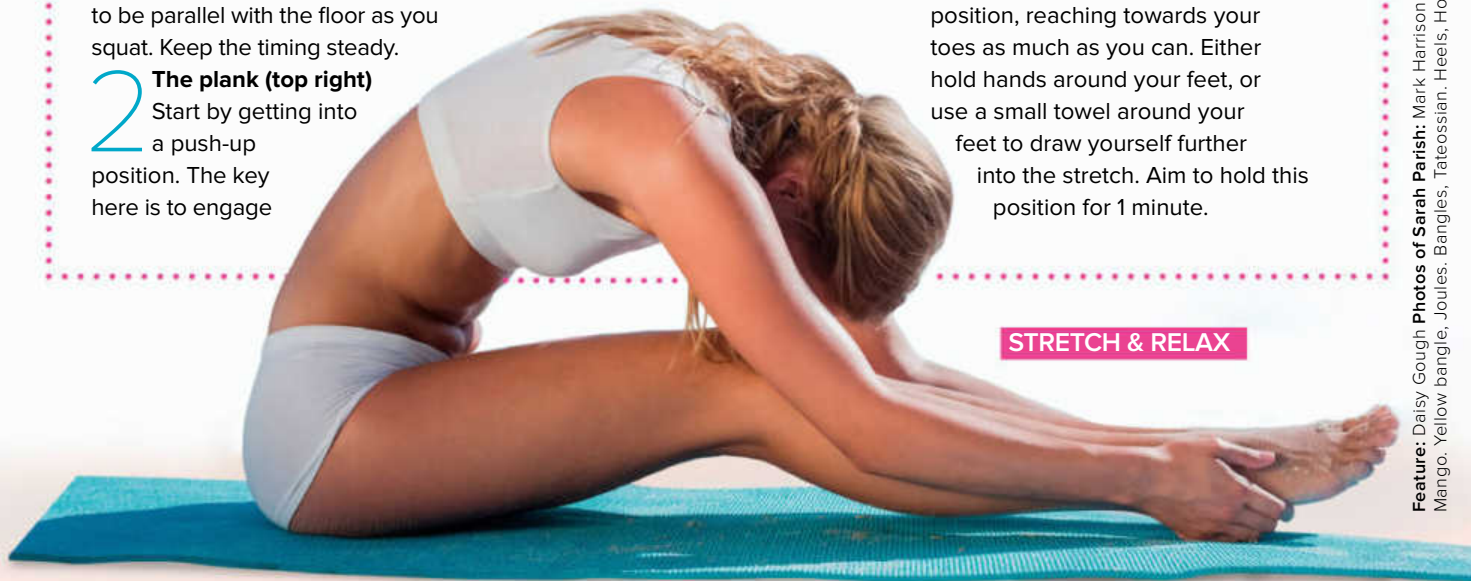
your core by pulling your belly button in towards your spine. Beginners: start on your knees and elbows. Intermediate: on toes and hands. Advanced: alternate between elbows and hands, keeping the core activated at all times. Once in position, bend your elbows and rest your weight on to your forearms or hands. To increase the intensity of the intermediate move, lift 1 leg by 5cm from the floor and then lower and change. Alternate legs every 5 seconds.

3 Static running Assume a running position, with 1 leg forward and the other back – as if you're about to start a race. Bend your arms and move them back and forth quickly, to mimic running very fast. Increase the speed of the

movement to increase the intensity and to raise the heart rate.

4 Leg raise & toe touch Lie on your back, with your shoulders on the floor and your legs straight up in the air. Breathe in. As you exhale, reach your hands forward towards your toes, lifting your shoulders, if possible. Pulse, as if you were doing a crunch, but only move a little bit.

5 Stretch & relax (below) This seated forward bend (known in yoga as the Paschimottanasana) is a great abs toner. Sit down with your legs flat and straight out in front of you. Breathe in, raise hands to the ceiling and slowly lean forward, keeping your back straight initially. Hold this position, reaching towards your toes as much as you can. Either hold hands around your feet, or use a small towel around your feet to draw yourself further into the stretch. Aim to hold this position for 1 minute.



STRETCH & RELAX

'IT WORKED FOR ME!'

Six months ago, actress Sarah Parish, 47, was looking and feeling good... but only good-ish. How things have changed!

Even though I was pretty fit for my age and felt I ate well, my hectic work schedule meant I was finding it increasingly difficult to stay in shape – and my energy wasn't brilliant either. I'd get really frustrated that I was doing everything right, but that by about 3pm I felt I could do with a nap. Sometimes I ended up having one! Then I met Rick and he suggested that, while what I'd been doing wasn't exactly wrong, I wasn't quite making the extra leap to feeling great, and that with a bit of a change I could improve things.'

True to the ethos of the anti-ageing fitness plan, Sarah found that making just a few tweaks to her own food and fitness moves was the way to go. And she found it less tricky than she imagined...

Easy start? 'Surprisingly, it doesn't feel like you're denying yourself anything. You're actually adding, not taking away, and that makes you feel good inside and out. I also loved the fact that there were no ridiculous promises. It's all about changing attitudes for life.'

Trickiest bit? 'Sugar. I'm a real sugar head – it was an addiction. I'd eat dinner then have an ice lolly, some chocolate and a few sweets! When you start to eat the right way, it doesn't feel like a diet and you quickly forget about sugar.'

Best food moves? 'I'm juicing a bit more, eating more plant-based foods and less meat. I definitely eat a lot more colourful fruits and vegetables. If it stains your hands, then it's good for you. When I was young, beetroot seemed a bit exotic – now I eat lots of it. I eat masses of berries, too. I always felt that they were bad for you because they were so full of sugar, but now I have them in

everything – juices, salads, everything. Blackberries are my favourite.'

The first improvement? 'Everything improved! My energy, skin, hair and nails. I stopped wanting to nap in the afternoon and my skin was brighter and more elastic – I had a great glow.'

Biggest treat? 'Instead of chocolates, I'll eat something like stewed pears

and berries – it's not the same at first, but it soon becomes a treat.'

The fun part? 'Juicing. I've been juicing for years now and I love to create my own. I have a morning juice routine. First, I have a shot of spirulina – it tastes terrible, but it has to be done. Then I make a veg-heavy juice using a yellow pepper, beetroot, celery, cucumber, apple and carrots, plus some grapefruit for the skin.'

How about exercise? 'I'd done some high-intensity training before, but combining it with the eating plan has helped me shift some of my really stubborn areas. I'm also trying a Vibraplate, which is great for your muscles and skeleton – horrible things like osteoporosis can be stopped by building muscle in the right places.'

And the payoff? 'I feel younger. When you feel it, you look it, and have a real glow about you.'



Sarah and expert Rick Hay



• Rick Hay's *The Anti Ageing Food & Fitness Plan* (Clink Street, £11.99) is out now. It features a 12-week plan, plus recipes, exercises and more. For news, ideas and instructional fitness videos, visit thesuperfoodist.com

Prima promotion

Spring into action

Enjoy a breather without the fever, thanks to the new nasal spray from Puressentiel, which clears warmer weather blocks and sneezes naturally



Getting out and about is one of spring's essential pleasures. But if you suffer from hay fever – which affects one in five people in the UK* – a blocked or runny nose is guaranteed to spoil the picnic.

For the past 10 years, family-owned aromatherapy company Puressentiel has been formulating and testing its 100% natural solutions to everyday aches and ailments. Containing only sea water, essential oils, propolis (from beehives) and echinacea, its Hypertonic Nasal Spray is clinically tested** and highly effective. It rapidly decongests a blocked nose,

‘This 100% natural spray contains sea water, essential oils, propolis and echinacea to clear nasal blocks and soothe hay fever symptoms’

soothes irritated mucous membranes and reduces the symptoms of summer colds, sinusitis and allergies. Its breathe-easy, hydrating action also leaves your nose feeling cool, comfortable and less prone to airborne irritants.

Kind to all the family – including children from three years old – spray it any time you feel a blocked nose or sneeze coming on. In fact, don't leave home without it!

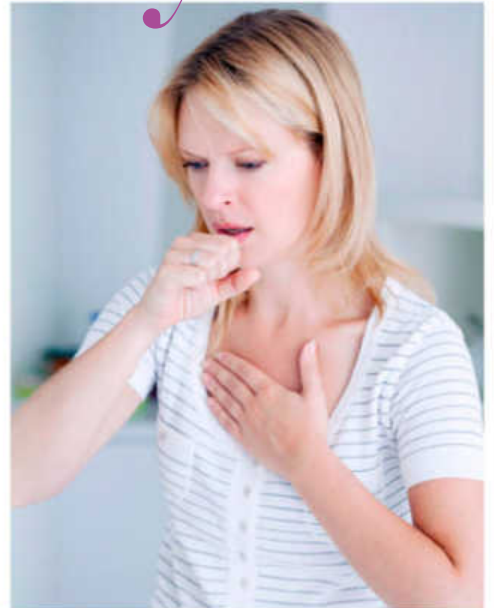
Puressentiel Hypertonic Nasal Spray, RRP £9.99, is available in larger Boots, Superdrug, Day Lewis and independent pharmacies. Visit puressentiel.com for more information about Puressentiel's effective 100% natural remedies for everyday ailments.



Source: *Asthma UK. ** Puressentiel clinical study with 30 volunteers under medical supervision for 8 days

When to worry & when not to

Dr Sarah Brewer, GP & expert in complementary medicine, offers her advice on the symptoms you should alert your doctor to



Unexplained lumps, bumps, coughs and headaches... all things we can suffer from at some point. While no one wants to see their GP unnecessarily, some symptoms act as an early warning system. Usually the diagnosis is not serious, but sometimes, seeking help early can make all the difference.

Weight loss for no apparent reason

This should always be taken seriously as it can be a sign of abnormal metabolism (undiagnosed diabetes in which calories are lost as sugar into the urine) or an overactive thyroid gland, as well as emotional problems (eg, depression, anorexia nervosa). Weight loss can also result from an infection of the heart valves, TB or an intestinal problem that prevents absorption of nutrients. Unexpected weight loss is also a 'red flag' that could indicate cancer. Early detection gives the best chance of a cure, so don't put off seeking help.

Any unusual lump

Benign lumps are common, and can be anything from a cyst (fluid-filled lump), polyp (a fleshy lump that tends to hang from a stalk), fatty growth (lipoma) or fibrous lump (fibroma). Deeper lumps may be due to enlargement of an organ or gland such as the liver, spleen, thyroid

or ovaries, or to displaced tissues such as a hernia. Lymph nodes can enlarge to form lumps – especially in the neck or groin – when fighting an infection such as a sore throat or thrush. The big worry with a lump is cancer, which must be ruled out. It is often difficult for even an experienced surgeon to tell one lump from another, so a biopsy may be required. If you notice an unusual lump or thickening, tell your doctor.

Pain that keeps coming back

Everyone suffers aches and pains from time to time, but if problems are recurrent, tell your doctor. Always report any repeated headache, indigestion, abdominal pain or chest pain, muscle or bone pain – especially if they are accompanied by other symptoms such as weight loss, tiredness, stiffness or change in bowel habit. Don't ignore them until they become more severe. If they last more than two weeks, seek medical advice – sooner

A persistent, nagging cough or shortness of breath

At certain times of the year, it can seem as if you're never free from coughs and colds. However, if you suffer from a persistent, nagging cough or shortness of breath, always tell a doctor. A cough is caused by irritation of the airways, while breathlessness suggests your lungs are not working as well as they might. Get checked – urgently if you also notice chest pain or cough up blood. Possible causes include asthma, chest infection (acute bronchitis), airway damage (COPD – chronic obstructive pulmonary disease – linked to smoking or air pollutants) and lung cancer. Shortness of breath can also result from fluid build-up in the lungs in congestive heart failure or severe anaemia.

if they are getting worse or are accompanied by other worrying symptoms.

A change in bowel habit

Yes, it's embarrassing to discuss these things, but this is one of the few ways your intestines can show that something is wrong. This can result from a sudden change in diet, infection, food poisoning or change in normal bacteria, say, after taking antibiotics. It can also be due to changes in bowel

function such as irritable bowel syndrome (see over the page). Other more serious causes include diverticulitis, inflammatory bowel disease, such as Crohn's, intestinal obstruction or bowel cancer. If you notice a change in bowel habit that lasts more than a week or so, seek medical advice – earlier if you develop abdominal pain or notice blood or mucus in your motions. Try not to feel embarrassed – remember your doctor is used to dealing with problems like this. ➔



Health & vitality

Maintaining a healthy, balanced diet every day can be hard, especially when a hectic work, home and social life gets in the way. Wellwoman Max helps to safeguard your daily nutritional intake with a wide range of nutrients, which support the areas of health that are most relevant to women. The handy 3-in-1 pack contains Wellwoman micronutrient vitamin and mineral tablets, including thiamin (vitamin B1), B6 and B12, which contribute to normal energy release. It also includes a tablet providing 500mg of calcium and 10µg of vitamin D, which are needed to maintain normal bones and teeth, plus a high-purity omega-3, 6 and 9 capsule including evening primrose oil.

RRP £19.85 (84 tablets). Wellwoman Max is available at Boots, supermarkets, pharmacies, health stores and wellwoman.com



Health advice

A skin blemish that changes or fails to heal

Skin cancer is becoming increasingly common, so check regularly for any blemish that seems to be changing – ask someone to examine your back and other places you cannot see yourself. If diagnosed early, the majority of skin cancers can be removed and the problem cured. Warning signs include a mark that starts to:

- get bigger • turn darker
- go scaly • itch • weep • crust over or scab without healing
- develop a raised, rolled edge • an ulcer or sore that gets worse or fails to heal within three weeks

While in many cases, the lesions will turn out to be harmless, some may be pre-cancerous, while others may have already developed abnormal cells. Many of these are easily treated in the early stages with simple removal, freezing (cryotherapy) or a topical cream. If allowed to progress, more aggressive treatment will be needed such as removing a larger area of skin, radiotherapy or chemotherapy.



Chest pain

Always take sudden chest pain seriously. Less serious triggers are acid reflux, heartburn and cramping, while more serious causes include angina, heart attack, clot on the lung (pulmonary embolus), a collapsed lung and lung cancer.

- **Chest pain from the lungs** is often worse on breathing in and may be accompanied by breathlessness, cough, or phlegm stained with pus or blood.
- **Heart pain** (angina or heart attack) is a tight, crushing sensation felt behind the chest bone. However, women (and the elderly) may not experience classic symptoms of a heart attack and may feel discomfort or unpleasant fullness anywhere in the chest, arms or back or feel light-headed, short of breath and break into a cold sweat.

Difficulty swallowing

Difficulty swallowing or feeling full despite eating little is usually associated with a viral sore throat or tonsillitis and quickly resolves (a throat swab can rule out a streptococcal infection that needs antibiotics). If it persists, is not accompanied by soreness or is associated

with feeling full while eating little, seek medical advice. Possible causes include benign problems affecting the swallowing muscles, such as narrowing of the oesophagus due to spasm or weakness of the muscles. However, difficulty swallowing is a 'red flag' symptom for a cancer of the oesophagus or upper stomach, and this will need to be ruled out.

IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS)

IBS affects at least a third of the population. Contraction of the bowel muscles leads to pain, bloating, constipation or diarrhoea – and symptoms can worsen with stress or certain foods. It is not a diagnosis you should make yourself, so seek medical advice. Many people with IBS benefit from a diet free from wheat, gluten, lactose, yeast and artificial sweeteners. Fibre is also

important, but increase it slowly and drink plenty of fluids. Try bran, figs, apricots, prunes, peas or beans. Alternatives to wheat include rye, wild rice, buckwheat, corn, soy, hempseed, brown rice, quinoa and teff. Eat more oily fish and live bio yoghurt. A number of herbs and spices can relieve bowel spasm and wind, such as aniseed, camomile, lemon balm,

clove, dill, fennel, black pepper, marjoram, parsley, peppermint, rosemary and spearmint. Use as garnish or drink herbal teas. Research shows peppermint oil can be an effective treatment for IBS, even more so than antispasmodic drugs, while probiotic supplements help replace gas-forming bacteria in the gut. Aloe vera juice is soothing, but opt for 'aloin-free' unless you want a laxative effect.

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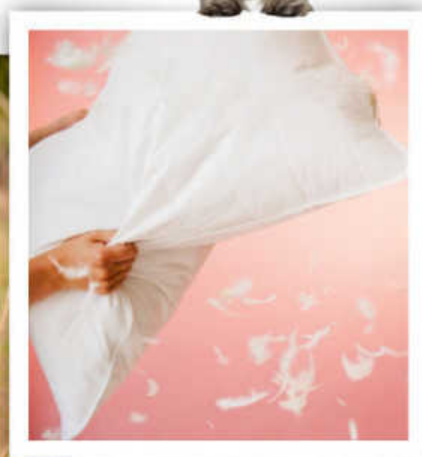
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Why are we all becoming SO allergic?



With spring in the air, hay fever season is upon us. But it's not just pollen that's making us sniffle – allergies to numerous triggers are on the rise. We look at the latest research and new treatments



Daffodils are springing up, blossom is filling the trees and the air is, at last, getting warmer. But the longer, lighter days signal the start of something else – allergy season. Hay fever (an allergy to grass and pollen) is now the most common allergic condition in the UK, affecting 15 million of us. But this isn't the only allergy causing discomfort. From bee and wasp stings to nuts and dust mites, we're in the midst of an allergy epidemic. According to Allergy UK, as many as one in three of us will develop an allergy during our lifetime. What's more, the number of sufferers is on the up, with health experts predicting that in the next 10 years, over half the population of Europe will be allergic to at least one thing. So why are we all becoming so sensitive?

What's going on?

There's much debate over the exact cause of this epidemic. Some scientists believe lifestyle factors, like urban living and pollution, are to blame. It's thought pollution can make existing allergens more of an irritant to our respiratory tract. However, other experts are pointing the finger at our increasing reliance on antibiotics. These medicines, meant to protect us, often severely reduce our harmless, friendly bacteria (which help regulate the immune system), leaving us more vulnerable to developing allergies. A US study in 2013 discovered that exposure to more than two courses of antibiotics in the first year of life was associated with an increased rate of food allergy. Moreover, researchers at King's College London and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust found that the use of antibiotics in early life could increase the risk of developing eczema, the allergic skin disease, by up to 40%.

Grass and tree pollen (hay fever), dust mites, animal dander and food are the most common allergies.

the substance is put on your forearm, followed by a pin prick) can help diagnose airborne allergens, some foods, insect venoms and some drug allergies. Patch tests are used to diagnose skin reactions, such as those to chemicals or metals. A small amount of the suspected allergen is added to special metal discs, which are then taped to your skin for 48 hours and monitored for a reaction.

Although home-testing kits are available, Dr Adrian Morris, a private allergy specialist at the Surrey Allergy Clinic, warns: 'Home tests bought over the internet are worthless. Even clinical tests must be done in conjunction with a full medical history.'

WHAT IS AN ALLERGY?

● An allergy develops when the body's immune system reacts to a normally harmless substance, such as a protein like pollen, as though it's a threat. The body then produces immunoglobulin E antibodies (IgE), which trigger the release of chemicals that cause the symptoms of an allergic reaction, such as rashes, wheezing or a runny nose. While many of us associate allergies with children, according to Allergy UK, more adults are developing them for the first time, too. Dr Pam Ewan, a consultant allergist at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, says: 'I've seen an increase in all ages, including the number of older adults, developing allergies over the past five years.' Worryingly, she believes these newly allergic adults are more likely to suffer from severe to even dangerous reactions, such as anaphylactic shock.

The number of people who have allergies to wheat, soya and dairy has doubled in the past decade.

Getting tested

While it's true that GPs can diagnose and treat mild allergies, if you need testing or specialist treatment, you should be referred to an allergy clinic. A skin prick test (where a drop of

FOOD INTOLERANCES

As many as 40% of us believe we have a food allergy, but the real figure is only around 2%. What we're probably suffering from is a food intolerance, which can't be diagnosed in the same way as other allergies. This is where a food causes an irritation to our body, but not a full-blown allergy. The only way to test for intolerance is to keep a food diary, noting down reactions as they occur.

NEW TREATMENTS

● **The good news** is that treatments are being discovered all the time, says Moira Austin, from the charity Anaphylaxis UK. 'Hospitals offer desensitisation programmes for people who suffer from an allergy to bee and wasp venom, the most common cause of anaphylaxis – a severe, sometimes life-threatening, allergic reaction. Antihistamines and inhalers can also be very useful.'

● **Sensitisation therapy** for peanut allergy may be available on the NHS at some point in the future, but is currently only on offer privately. For those suffering from severe allergic asthma and eczema, another option could soon be available in the form of a drug called *Dupilumab*. While not yet available in the UK, the once-a-week jab has been hailed as 'life-changing' by patients in the US, where it has been fast-tracked for those who don't respond to other treatments, such as inhalers.

Blitz allergies

● HOUSE DUST MITES Ditch

bedroom curtains in favour of wooden shutters or blinds, and swap carpets for wood or laminate floors for easy dusting. Reduce mites from bedding by covering mattresses, pillows and quilts with dust-mite-resistant covers, washing every two months. To kill mites, wash bedding and pillow cases at 60 degrees or tumble dry sheets on a hot setting for at least 10 minutes.

● MOULD Remove visible mould with bleach or anti-mould cleaners.

For invisible mould, avoid carpets in bathrooms, and lose indoor plant pots, known to promote mould growth.

● POLLEN Stay indoors during times of high pollen counts. If you're in a car, use recirculated air. Avoid activities



that expose you to pollen, like mowing grass. If you're exposed, shower and change your clothes as soon as you can.

● PETS Clean your pet regularly, and restrict them to downstairs, so you have somewhere to retreat to, if required. For severe symptoms, ask about desensitisation therapy, which injects a tiny amount of the allergen into your body until you no longer react.

HOME REMEDIES

- For airborne allergies (such as to pollen, cats and dogs) and house dust mites, an air purifier can be useful. Try HoMedics HEPA Air Purifier (from £99, Amazon).
- Applying a balm such as Vaseline around your nostrils can help trap allergens before they can be inhaled. Try HayMax Pollen Barrier Balm (£6.99, Boots).
- Some studies show probiotic supplements containing *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *Bifidobacterium* may help with dust-mite allergies and asthma. For kids or those who hate taking tablets, a tasty alternative is dark chocolate balls containing probiotics. Try Bioglan Biotic Balance ChocBalls (£14.99, Holland & Barrett).

• For more, visit allergyuk.org or call Allergy UK's helpline on 01322 619898

IN MY CASE 'I WANT TO SHOW PEOPLE THEY'RE NOT ALONE'



Ruth Holroyd, 42, is a freelance marketing manager. She lives in Buckinghamshire and runs the website whatallergy.com.

'My first experience of an allergy was vomiting after eating peanuts at the age of 10. As I grew older, I began to develop more frightening symptoms. Eating eggs sent me into anaphylactic shock. Then, in my teens, an Indian meal containing nuts made me pass out. I was later diagnosed with anaphylaxis – and my GP gave me an adrenalin syringe to revive me if I went into shock. Over the years, eating has become

a minefield. As well as reacting to soya and wheat, kidney beans have recently left me with hives. Even wine has its risks – alcohol increases your metabolism, making you react faster and more severely to allergens. I know instantly when I'm having a reaction – my skin goes red, I get hives and I feel ill. Being allergic to so many foods can be isolating, which is why, five years ago, I started a blog on my website. By writing about the emotional side of allergies, I hope to show people like me they're not alone.'

Allergies run in the family, with children having a 50/50 chance of developing the same one as their parents.

IN MY CASE 'I REFUSE TO LET MY ALLERGIES DEFINE ME'



Liz Knight, 52, lives with her husband in Devon and has three grown-up children.

'I've suffered from allergies

for as long as I can remember. As a child, I was allergic to dust, animals and feathers, and I suffered from eczema and asthma, too. All were relatively easy to manage. But when, in my thirties, I was diagnosed with an allergy to latex after a bad reaction to a dentist's gloves, life became more difficult. I soon discovered that latex is in so many everyday things – from the handrail on escalators to toothbrushes.

Surprisingly, bananas and kiwi fruit contain the same proteins found in latex, and they were soon

'Allergies changed my life but are manageable'

banned from my diet, too. I was able to keep it under control until I hit my late forties, when I started going through the menopause. My allergies became worse – my face would swell, I'd get blistering rashes and feel hot and dizzy. Once again, I was referred to the hospital for tests – and, to my surprise, diagnosed with a whole host of allergies to metal. These include nickel – which is found in jewellery and many foods, such as nuts, beans, seeds, chocolate, tomatoes, brown bread and green veg – and chrome salts, found in shoes, handbags and purses. I could no longer wear clothes with zips or metal buttons and had to swap my glasses for plastic ones.

Now 52, my allergies are manageable – I take medication to suppress my immune system – but they've changed my life. My last job was in a pharmacy, but when I discovered I was allergic to the ink used on the prescriptions, I had to give it up. Going out remains a challenge – but I refuse to let my allergies define me.'

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Arthritis – an ‘old age’ condition that can strike at any time

Arthritis may be in your mental file of ‘things to worry about in 20 years’, but here’s what you need to know *now*

You may think arthritis only affects people who are older than you – much older. But while it is most commonly diagnosed in people over 45, symptoms can strike at any age and it affects more women than men – especially if you’re carrying extra weight or you’ve had an injury in the past. That means a sprained ankle from your twenties could come back to haunt you.



WHAT IS ARTHRITIS?

Arthritis means inflammation of the joints, and most sufferers will experience pain and difficulty with mobility. Around 10 million people in the UK have arthritis* – usually either the autoimmune disease rheumatoid arthritis (RA) or, more commonly, osteoarthritis (OA), which occurs when there is damage around the

joint that the body can’t fully repair. This breaks down the cartilage covering and protecting the ends of your bones in the joints, leaving bone to rub against bone, which causes pain, swelling and stiffness. While for some people, the symptoms will be relatively mild, for others the pain can be constant and severe.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?

Although OA can occur in any joint, it’s most common in the knees, hips and hands. Your knees absorb a force equal to three times your bodyweight with every step, and symptoms of the most common type of OA, such as tenderness, can occur in the knee 20 years earlier than in other joints.

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

There is still no definitive test for OA, but your GP will be able to assess the likelihood that joint pain is arthritic based on the site and severity of the pain. They may also recommend a blood test, x-ray or CT scan in a bid to confirm the diagnosis or rule out other conditions.

What can help?

- **Drugs are not yet available** to reverse the joint damage, but new research is exploring whether anti-inflammatory drugs effective in treating RA may be effective for OA, too. A study at Keele University also found a link between statins – drugs used to lower cholesterol – and improvements in OA.
- **But if you’d rather avoid the GP**, some studies suggest

the key to pain relief could be in your kitchen. Capsaicin, found in chilli peppers, can desensitise nerve cells, and ginger is thought to reduce the production of substances involved in joint inflammation.

- **Wearing uniquely calibrated ‘biomechanical’ AposTherapy shoes** can retrain and strengthen your muscles (apostherapy.co.uk).



The shoes are part of a 12-month programme that starts at £2,480. It’s costly, but in a BUPA study, AposTherapy reduced pain for almost nine out of 10 testers.

- **The Ayurvedic plant remedy Indian frankincense** (*boswellia*) helps prevent the production of hormone-like substances that trigger joint inflammation. **TRY** *Pukka Active*, £15.95, *health stores*

SEEKING SURGERY

Having a hip or knee joint replacement is an option if pain is interfering with your life, says Philip Conaghan, professor of musculoskeletal medicine at the University of Leeds. ‘Most see good results, but hip replacements do better than knees,’ he says. Joints last about 20 years but due to complications around further surgery, you may not receive a knee replacement under 60.

Find out more from arthritisresearchuk.org

‘Can I love a child who isn’t my own?’



Rosalind Powell, 52, who lives in London with her husband Harry and son, explains how she became a parent with a difference

‘My son has an unusual skill for a 13-year-old boy: choosing me perfect gifts. Last Mother’s Day, he bought me a pair of dark red glass earrings – my favourite colour. The year before he gave me bar of frangipani soap, as he knew the smell would remind me of a holiday I once had in Bali.

He knows my tastes and habits, how to cheer me up – and wind me up. Like any family, we have carved our own unique shape, shared memories and jokes, interests and experiences.

He has not a shred of me and my husband Harry’s DNA, and yet he is very much our son. His skin is a beautiful light brown, ours is mottled pink. He’s a light-hearted optimist with a good ear for music, neither attributes we share. But sometimes when I look at him I see Harry: the way he points with his middle finger, or can fix a leaky tap. We make each other laugh. No one can frustrate me more, but then I don’t love anyone in the way I love him.

I guess what I’m trying to say is that when it comes to nature versus nurture, I believe nurture wins hands down. And that is never put more to the test than with adoption.

SEEKING A NEW PATH

The fundamental question for anyone considering adoption is: can I love a child who isn’t my own? This is what we had to ask ourselves when we first embarked on our path to find a family. After three failed IVF attempts, and the hormonal and emotional upheaval that

comes with fertility treatment, we were left feeling bereft and unsure how to move on. We took a year out to consider our options and to plot Plan B if we weren’t able to have children. We could change careers, travel the world, write novels. But there would be a big hole in my heart.

So we decided to investigate adoption. We knew it was no longer a case of newborn babies being relinquished by unmarried mothers, and that many of the children up for adoption now have more than likely been taken away from their parents and come through the care system.

Undaunted, we signed up with an independent adoption agency in 2001 and embarked on a home study with our social worker, Satwinder. Over the next six months, we were asked deeply personal questions about our ability to be parents. We were finally approved by an adoption panel in 2002, and spent the next two years in limbo, waiting. It was a frustrating time, as we were sent details of children to consider whose life stories gave me a glimpse into a cruel world. Others didn’t feel right. It felt awful turning them down, but we wanted to do right not only by ourselves but, more importantly, by the children we were asked to consider. It was essential that we knew our limitations.

By early 2004, we were on the verge of giving up. The prospect of

ever becoming a family felt too remote, and the process too difficult. Then, in March, Satwinder rang with details of a little boy. We’d found our son. I heard his name and felt an instant sense of recognition. A day later, we were sent his photo – he was wearing pyjamas, his foster mother’s slippers and a smile – and the sense of familiarity grew.

Harry and I met him for the first time in May. The meeting was so exciting and nerve-wracking that I remember shivering, even though it was a warm day. We spent an “introductory” week

with him at his foster carers, who’d looked after him since birth. He came to live with us a week later, just before his second birthday.

Adoption is a leap of faith that co-exists

with fear, and I was scared to begin with. We’d spent almost eight years yearning for a child and then one came storming into our life like a small tornado.

Overnight, my life changed in more ways than I could ever imagine: I went from being a journalist and writer, working in a busy office to a person who never had time to finish a conversation. I mastered the art of crawling on all fours pushing small cars mumbling “brum brum”; I rarely socialised, but would look forward to my first glass of wine at 6pm, sharp; I had more patience than I’d thought, but also discovered a bad temper; my world shrank to a mile radius where I became intimate with every café and park. Everything took a lot longer

‘He has not a shred of our DNA, and yet he is very much our son’

than it used to. It was, in short, a crash course in parenting. Of course, these are common experiences for every parent of a toddler. But most have had at least two years with their child to get into training. We didn't know each other, let alone love each other. Like an arranged marriage, we had to wait for true love to arrive.

At first, he called us both Harry, which he'd shout out loudly in the park. It took six weeks before he called us Mummy and Daddy – maybe we had to earn the titles.

FINDING OUR FEET

Our son is a sunny-natured, bright child, but there were difficult spells: he had been taken from the only family he'd ever known and was, in effect, in mourning. At times, he became angry, tired of being on his best behaviour and testing us to see if we'd stay. Times of change have been hard for him – moving house, changing schools. But he was also incredibly adaptable and brave.

We have, on occasions, had to field awkward questions from nosey strangers. Our son is mixed-heritage, we're white, and I've been asked why he has brown eyes when ours are blue.

Sometimes, his friends at primary school would ask me if I was his "real" mum. One boy went so far as to tell him – and me – that I definitely wasn't.

But these incidents have been very rare. He's 13 now, and interested in his birth family up to a point, but doesn't dwell on it. One day, he might want to trace his birth parents and, if/when he does, we'll support him all the way.

Part of the process of adopting is feeling a sense of "entitlement" to be a parent. I felt I had to earn the right to be a mother. As I now watch him grow into a young man, developing his own plans for the future, I feel proud of what a remarkable individual he has become. And, like any parent, I can take some credit for that, too.'

• *Rosalind's book, How I Met My Son: A Journey Through Adoption* (Blink Publishing, £8.99), is out now



ROSALIND'S GUIDE TO ADOPTION

- Before you begin the process, talk to other adopters and read up about it as much as you can.
- Be honest with yourself, decide on your parameters and stick to them. Work out what you feel you can offer as parents in terms of a child's age, sibling groups, or any difficulties. If you're adopting with a partner, make sure you want the same thing and work as a team.
- Get to know your social worker.
- Although the Government has promised to speed up the process and placement of children, be prepared for a wait, for difficult decisions and for some disappointment along the way.
- Make sure that you receive full information about any child you consider adopting – leave no question unanswered.

USEFUL WEBSITES

- first4adoption.org.uk
- baaf.org.uk
- adoptionuk.org
- pactcharity.org

‘It’s never too late to make a million... I know, I did!’

Self-made businesswoman and mum of four Sarah Willingham shares her tips for success

Born into a working-class family in Stoke, the newest Dragon, Sarah Willingham, worked her way up from waiting tables as a teenager to become one of the country’s top entrepreneurs. Now 42, Sarah combines million-pound business deals with the demands of motherhood.

After working for Planet Hollywood and Pizza Express, Sarah struck out on her own in 2003 to launch the successful Bombay Bicycle Club restaurant chain. But with a growing family (Minnie, nine, Monti, seven, Nelly, five and Marly, four), she decided to sell her shares and focus on a more flexible career.

Today, Sarah and her husband Michael run their business portfolio together from their home in Oxfordshire. Their interests range from new start-ups to food and drink brands and clients in the entertainment sector. Sarah is keen to help inform and empower consumers, fronting the website letssavemoney.com, which advises on home finances. Last year, she joined the panel on BBC Two’s *Dragons’ Den*.

Here, she passes on what she has learned along the way...



1 BE FIXATED BY FIGURES

I'm pretty intuitive, but I've learned that you have to back up your gut feeling with facts. I have taught myself to embrace numbers, and now I can't have a business without good figures on which I can base a strong decision. So learn to love your numbers – they could save you!

2 DO YOUR HOMEWORK

If you think you have a business idea, don't give up your day job before you've proved the concept to yourself. Do it in the evenings or at weekends when it isn't interfering too much with your life and you aren't risking anything. Try to prove it works so that you know if you're on to something or not. Ultimately, if the idea works, it will take over and you'll resign from your job.

3 EMBRACE YOUR FEARS

I work a lot with schools in deprived areas, talking to teenagers, and I always tell them: never let fear control you. You have to tackle it head-on and make whatever it is you're scared of, whatever makes you think 'I can't do this', part of your comfort zone. Eventually, you'll look back and think, 'What was I worried about?'

4 EVERYONE HAS CONFIDENCE CRISES

I get 'imposter syndrome' all the time. I'll call my mum and say: 'This is it – they're going to find me out.' I called her about *Dragons' Den* and she reminded me that I said the same thing on my first day of university, when Pizza Express employed me, on the first day of filming with Raymond Blanc on *The Restaurant*, and when I bought the Bombay Bicycle Club... It's something I've said my whole life. Recently, I went to St James's Palace to hand out The Duke of Edinburgh's Awards, and I was looking over my shoulder thinking, 'Have they got the right person?'

5 CONTROL YOUR DIARY

Becoming a mum has made me unbelievably efficient with my time. My children are all under 10,

and I'm very aware that I will never get this time back again. When I consider anything, I work out how long it will take. The one thing in life you can't buy is time, and it's the most precious thing in the world to me. So if it takes all of your time to make more money, well, what's the point? If I can spend my hours more valuably, it makes me happy.

6 STICK TO BOUNDARIES

When I'm with my children, my phone gets switched off and I don't check my emails. I took two months off last summer, three weeks at Christmas and more days at half-term. And when I am in my office, I am totally focused; I'm clear on my work hours and the lines don't blur. It's the most difficult thing I do, but if you don't stick to strict boundaries, you end up doing everything badly. I tried to mix being a mum with working and failed miserably.

7 WORK AS A TEAM

There is no way I could do what I do without my husband, Michael. He has dedicated himself to having a balanced life, too. He runs all our businesses and works extremely hard. He also does the school runs and takes up the slack when I am filming *Dragons' Den*. To grow up in an equal household – whether it's changing a nappy or making a big business decision – is really important for both my sons and my daughters. The only thing that isn't equal is the cooking – but that's because I love it and won't let Michael near my kitchen!

8 MINIMISE RISK

I feel very strongly about risk-taking. You have to be smart so that you don't take risks. Never risk what you have accomplished so far: don't risk the roof over your head or the things that matter to you, and don't make personal guarantees. Look at the worst possible scenario and, if you can't handle it, don't do it.

Tough but fair:
Sarah (left) with
her fellow Dragons



9 HELP OTHER WOMEN

We're a humble nation and don't shout about anything but, actually, brilliance breeds brilliance. People should stand up and acknowledge how good they are. That, in turn, will encourage others. If one woman sees me on *Dragons' Den* and thinks 'she's a mum of four from Stoke and she's doing this' and is motivated by that, then my work is done. I don't have a private jet or a yacht or a chauffeur. I'm normal. I shop at Aldi. I'm a hands-on mum. Obviously, I've done all right, but that's because I have worked really, really hard and have been lucky that what I love doing happens to be something you can make money from.

10 DON'T FOLLOW THE CROWD

I was lucky to be born with a natural drive, and to great parents. My mum encouraged independence, and I grew up with the ability to go left when everyone else went right. During my A levels, I decided I wanted to study half in the UK and half abroad. Only one course offered that – an International Business degree at Oxford Brookes. The university rejected me, so I went through clearing. In hindsight, it was a massive gamble, but that never entered my head. No one could believe what I was doing, but I knew it was the only thing I wanted to do. On results day, I called Oxford Brookes and argued my way in. It worked: I got accepted.

• Sarah's new app, *Jangle* (free; Google Play, Apple), aims to teach children money management skills for the future

SORT YOUR TECH NIGGLES

Computers

HOW TO STOP GETTING SO MANY EMAILS

- **UNSUBSCRIBE** Work your way through your unwanted list of companies who send you emails, clicking on the unsubscribe button – it's time-consuming but ultimately satisfying.
- **A-Z** When clearing your inbox, sort emails alphabetically so it's easier to spot and bulk-delete the heavy senders.
- **RUN TWO ACCOUNTS** Use a second email address for online purchases and any websites you're forced to subscribe to, keeping your main address dross-free and exclusively for genuine correspondence.
- **TAKE OUT THE TRASH** File what you need to keep in themed inbox folders, then take a few minutes every day (or once a week) to delete and achieve that Holy Grail: 'inbox zero'.



HOW TO SPEED UP THE INTERNET

- **TEST YOURSELF** Use the tester on broadband.co.uk to find out the speed of your broadband. The UK national average download speed is 20.56 Mb. If yours is slower than it should be, contact your internet provider to see if there's a fault that can be fixed, or if you can upgrade your package or router.
- **CHANGE BROWSER** If you're using an old version of Internet Explorer or Safari, you may see an improvement by switching to another browser such as Google Chrome, which you can download for free.
- **PULL THE PLUG ON WI-FI DRAINERS** Everything plugged into your router – from smart security cameras to music-streaming systems – slows down your internet. Switch off what you're not using and see if that speeds things up.



Slow Wi-Fi, mountains of emails, rubbish phone battery? It's time to take control!



Smartphones

HOW TO MAXIMISE YOUR PHONE'S BATTERY LIFE

If there's one thing we would all change about smartphones, it's the short battery life. Here's how you can avoid that end-of-evening panic when you daren't call or text in case the power goes completely.

● **DIM DOWN** The screen is a big drain on battery life, so turn the brightness down as low as you can cope with – even if it's only on days when you're going to be out late.

● **BANISH BLUETOOTH** By continually scanning for signals, Bluetooth uses battery power even when you're not using it to pair with something else, such as speakers. Go into Settings and keep it switched off until needed.

● **SHUT DOWN WI-FI** When you're out and about, your phone is constantly searching for the nearest Wi-Fi connection. Give the battery a rest by switching it off when you're not using it.

● **POWER SAVE** If your battery is running low, go to Settings and switch to power-saving mode. This stops automatic functions, like email fetching and downloads, and keeps the phone alive for longer.



HOW TO TRADE IN YOUR OLD PHONE

Do you have a drawer with an unused mobile phone – or three? It's estimated that Brits are sitting on £4.7billion worth of redundant phones*. Even that forgotten mobile with the cracked screen has value, but wipe it clean of any personal data (see below) before you cash it in.

● **SELL ONLINE** Once clean, sell your phone on eBay or to a dedicated phone recycling site – carphonewarehouse.com takes all phones, even damaged ones.

● **UPGRADE FOR CREDIT** If you fancy upgrading to a new iPhone, Apple will give you credit for your old smartphone in store or online, even if it's a different brand. See how much yours is worth on the reuse and recycling page at apple.com.

HOW TO ERASE DATA

First, back up any cloud storage accounts you're using, then start the data wipe.

● **IPHONE** Ensure you have your Apple ID ready. In Settings, go to General>Reset>Erase All Content and Settings>Erase iPhone.

● **ANDROID** The reset can take some time, so plug your phone into a socket. In Settings select Security, then Encrypt Device, making sure not to interrupt the process. Once the encryption is finished, go to Personal>Backup and Reset>Factory Data Reset>Reset Phone.

Tablets

HOW TO AVOID 'TABLET NECK'

If you spend a lot of time browsing online or streaming catch-up TV, you may have succumbed to that 21st-century ailment 'tablet neck' (or 'tablet shoulder').

Most fold-back tablet covers don't deliver a perfect viewing angle, especially if you're in bed or on the sofa. This iBeani beanbag lets the tablet snuggle into the right position, whether you're under the duvet or at the kitchen table. Lightweight and fleecy, it has a carry handle so tablet addicts can tote it around from room to room. £24.99, iBeani



HOW TO PRINT FROM YOUR TABLET

As long as you have a compatible Wi-Fi printer, you can print directly from a tablet – iPads via Airprint and Android tablets via the Google Cloud Print app. So if you do decide to buy a new printer, it's well worth choosing one that covers both systems. Brands such as Epson and HP also have their own Wi-Fi printing apps.

Televisions

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR TV'S SOUND

Getting more boom for your buck means no longer asking your partner, 'What did he say?' throughout your favourite programme. Sometimes it's not you or your TV. The BBC was forced to adjust sound levels after thousands of complaints from viewers unable to hear the dialogue on the drama *Jamaica Inn*. But there are ways to improve the sound.



● **ADD A SOUNDBAR** TVs are getting even slimmer, meaning less space for speakers. To enhance the sound, you can add a soundbar: a long, thin speaker that sits in front of the set and usually comes with a separate subwoofer for improved bass, which you put on the floor.

HOW TO CHOOSE A GOOD KITCHEN TV

Now that 50in-plus TVs are almost the norm, small

TVs are the poor relation when it comes to design and quality. You'll often be watching the screen in your kitchen from above rather than straight on, so go to the TV department of a store before you buy and check the viewing angles.

● **BUY SMART** There's more choice if you have room for a 32in set, but if you prefer something more discreet, the 24in Panasonic 24CS500B packs in a lot for its size – it's a smart TV with Freeview HD. £199.95, John Lewis

Spring to life

Welcome the new season into your home with the latest pastel colours, fresh flowers and floral prints



Zeppelin three-seater **sofa** in nougat dexter's linen, £1120; Peggy **armchair** in dusty rose pure cotton matt velvet, £570, both Sofa.com. On sofa: Hiccup **cushions**, £35 each, Loaf. Grey and pastel floral **cushion**, £49, Caravan. Block striped **throw**, £59, Marks & Spencer. Bloomsbury floral **cushion**, £12, Sainsbury's. On chair: **Cushion** upholstered in Langley Moorland V3150/05, £40 per metre, Villa Nova. Luxe round side **table**, £195, Oliver Bonas. Lina grey side **table**, £65, Cox & Cox. Hay DLM **table** in lavender, £119, Amara. On tables (from l-r): Ysabel bloom **tray**, £11.95, Rockett St George. Concertina **vase**, £14.95, Rigby & Mac. Miss Étoile harlequin coffee **mug**, £14, Amara. Pastel floral **mug**, £15 for 4, Marks & Spencer. Treasure diamond-shaped **pot**, £28, Ferm Living. Brass pippin **flower rack**, £28, Rowen & Wren. Glass **bowl**, £7 for 3, Rigby & Mac. Miss Étoile ceramic **jar**, £13, Amara. Vintage print **rug**, from £59;

Pastel palette

Stick to neutrals for walls, floors and furniture, while introducing patterns on your curtains, cushions and rug. Keep the look fresh by dotting flowers around the room. Open shelving is a clever way to retain a feeling of spaciousness.

COFFEE BREAK

Adding a floral arrangement to your coffee table can turn anything into an occasion. You don't need a big bouquet – just a few sprigs from your garden will work, especially when placed in eye-catching vases like these test tubes.

BELOW: Hay DLM **table** in lavender; brass pippin flower **rack**, both as before. Abigail Warner A5 **notebook**, £12, John Lewis. **Pen**, £5, Paperchase. Colourful **espresso maker**, £17.95, Rigby & Mac. Marble **coaster**, £18.50 for 4, Oliver Bonas



Conran Ryton floor **lamp**, £299, both Marks & Spencer. Tickety reclaimed fir and steel **shelves**, £595, Loaf. On shelves: Hema hand-forged **candlesticks**, £40 for 2, Cox & Cox. Gray & willow ceramic **vase**, £32; Gray & Willow Ede mini bud **vase**, £8, both House of Fraser. Gold and glass nesting trinket **boxes**, £20, Oliver Bonas. Rectangular embossed **platter**, £12, BHS. Glazed pale rose **vase**, £8.50, Berry Red. Blush egg **vase**, £9.50, Cox & Cox. Floral **tin**, £12.50 for 3, Marks & Spencer. Blush pillar **candles**, from £5.50; Turning hare standing block **print**, £18.50, both Cox & Cox. White rabbit **candle holders**, £29 for 2, Caravan. Hemingway design **tealight holder**, £8, House of Fraser. Gold and mint contrast metal **bowl**, £30, Oliver Bonas. Embossed **bowl**, £12, BHS. Floral **box**, £10 for 3, BHS. Ombre **basket**, £34.95 for 3, Rigby & Mac. Bloomingville grey storage **box**, £81 for 4, Amara ➔

Have you gone noseblind?

What you smell

What your
guests smell



NEW SCENTS

Continuously eliminates odours
and freshens for 90 days.*

Winner Air Freshener Category.
Survey of 11,586 People in UK & ROI by TNS.

*each refill lasts up to 90 days if used for 12 hours per day at minimum setting.

Breathe Happy

Make an entrance

Update your hallway with a luxuriously tactile ottoman. It'll look – and feel – great, while also providing extra hidden storage and a seat for when you're putting on your shoes. Hang a painted, eye-catching Hula Hoop to your stairs and tie on some flowers and ribbon to make a statement.

LEFT: Velvet **ottoman**, £395, Oliver Bonas. On ottoman: White and grey tassel **blanket**, £145, Graham and Green. Raindrops **cushion**, £35, John Lewis. **Cushion** upholstered in Langley Moorland V3150/05, as before. Rice stacking sandwich **boxes**, £11.50 for 8, Berry Red. Milk **bottles**, £9.95 for 6 and crate, Rigby & Mac. On floor: Mint-dipped belly **basket**, £29, Olli Ella. Block striped **throw**, as before. Hanging: **Hula Hoop** (spray-painted white), £2, Poundstretcher. **Ribbon**, £1 per metre, Jane Means



SITTING PRETTY

Position a chair in front of a window, or wherever there's a suntrap. Make yourself comfortable by adding a cushion and throw, and curl up with your Prima! We've blended the boundaries between inside and out with a large butterfly print and fresh flowers displayed under a glass cloche.

RIGHT: Rattan cone **chair**, £200, Cox & Cox. Nordal happy round **stool**, £68, Amara. On chair: Pink geometric **throw**, £59.99, Rigby & Mac. **Cushion**, from a selection, Debenhams. On stool: Glass plant **cloche**, £25, Cox & Cox. Milk **bottle**, as before. **Vase**, £25 for 3, Debenhams. On wall: Pink mother-of-pearl butterfly **print**, from £55, Cox & Cox. Topa **rug**, £150, Habitat ➔



Come dine with me

Add some life to your dining table with simple, pastel-coloured chairs – using mismatched ones makes it feel more contemporary. Embrace spring with a striking centrepiece of fresh blooms displayed in an oversized vase. Continue the theme by dotting smaller plants around the table. Finish off the look with a floral tablecloth and pastel earthenware.



Farrington extending dining **table**, £980, Debenhams. Muuto Nerd **chairs**, £299 each, Houseology. Talia grey dining **chairs**, £95 each, Habitat. On table: Block Print Diya Rose **tablecloth**, £40, Berry Red. Floris dinner **plate**, £40 for 4; Floris **bowl**, £35 for 4; Wobbler side **plate**, £35 for 4, all Loaf. Tribeca 12-piece **dinner set**, £39.50, Marks & Spencer. Pomax origine **napkin**, £4.50, Amara. Lake blue linen **napkins**, £5.49 each, Linen Me. Skuren **cutlery**, £20 for 24-piece set, Ikea. Turquoise melamine **cups**, £2.50 each, Rockett St George. Mix & match jumbo pink **straws**, £3 for 30, Talking Tables. Linda Bloomfield **cake stands**, £44

‘Embrace spring with
a striking centrepiece of
fresh blooms’



(small); £58 (medium), both Notonthehighstreet.com. Wilham ceramic egg plant **pots**, £14 each, Rowen and Wren. Elegant recycled **vase**, £30, Cox & Cox. Le Creuset stoneware petite **casserole dish**, £17, John Lewis. Salt and pepper **bottles**, £42 for the set, Hus & Hem. Retro blue print **vase**, £32.95, Rigby & Mac. Evie fluted creamer **jug**, £32, Rowen & Wren. Rectangular embossed **platter**, as before. On wall: Tula A4 framed art **print**, £45, Olli Ella



PLATES OF PLEASURE

A pretty cloth forms the backdrop for your table setting. Tie retro cutlery to cotton napkins with ribbon, and look for plates with interesting textures that can be stacked for an eclectic look.

ABOVE: Block Print Diya Rose **tablecloth**, Floris dinner **plate**, both as before. Puritan side **plate**, £6, John Lewis. EVA side **plate**, £5.50, Nordic House. Pink **tag**, £2 for 10, Jane Means. Pomax origine **napkin**, as before. Vero mint **knife**, £3.50; **fork**, £3, both John Lewis. **Ribbon**; Wilham ceramic egg plant **pots**, as before. Dillie champagne **saucer**, £38 for 4, Rowen & Wren

MAKE A STAND

Decorate your table for afternoon tea with floral prints and pastel-hued plates. Give it a stylish edge by placing fresh flowers in a coffee pot and put utensils in a ceramic egg pot. Add treats, sit down and tuck in!

BELOW: Block Print Diya Rose **tablecloth**, as before. Rice melamine **plates**, £34.50 for 6, Berry Red. Rosalie scalloped **cake stand**, £29.50, Marks & Spencer. Linda Bloomfield **cake stand**; glass **bowl**, as before.

Macarons, £19.25 for 7, Cake Cetera. Enamel **coffee pot**, £20, Garden Trading. Wilham ceramic egg plant **pot**; **napkin** as before. Cake **forks**, £9.95 for 12, Rigby & Mac ➔



Step into my office

Adopt a Scandi feel in your home office with a sleek, minimalist look that makes the most of the natural light. Think painted wooden floors and an oak desk. Add warmth with coloured accessories and flowers.



ABOVE LEFT: Phineas oak **desk**, £545, Loaf. Muuto Visu **chair** with wire base, £249, Nest.co.uk. Nova kilim **rug**, £175, Olli Ella. On chair: Pink **cushion** with gold spots, £24.95, Rigby & Mac. On desk: Raindrops index **card holder**, £8; Get organized accessory **jars**, £8 for 3, all Paperchase. **Boxes**, £35 for 5, Amara. Purist bird **vase**, £19.75, Graham and Green. Kaleido **tray**, £9 (extra small), Amara. Milk **bottle**, as before. Turquoise table **lamp**, £58, Oliver Bonas. Rosenthal mint **vase**, £23, Amara. Undercover leather **pencil case**, £15; cube wooden **ruler**, £5, both Amara. Abigail Warner A5 **notebook**; Treasure diamond-shaped **pot**, as before. Hay Ballograf ballpoint **pen**, £19, Amara. On floor: Green **boxes**, £35 for 5, Amara. Acton pink **fabric**; Acton mint **fabric**; Henley stripe mint **fabric**, all £29.50 per metre, all Ian Mankin. Tula A4 framed **art print**, as before. Ombre **baskets**, £34.95 for 3, Rigby & Mac. Hanging: Test tube **vases**, £2.99 each, Loop the Loop

ABOVE: Phineas oak **desk**, as before. **Boxes**, £35 for 5, Amara. Purist bird **vase**, gold and glass nesting trinket **boxes**, all as before. Pink desk **lamp**, £99, Rigby & Mac. Kaleido **tray**; milk **bottle**; undercover leather **pencil case**; cube wooden **ruler**; **pens**, Abigail Warner A5 **notebook**, Hay Ballograf ballpoint **pen**, all as before. **Ring binder**, £3, Raindrops **A4 pad**, £2.50, Valentine's sticky **notes**, £5, all Paperchase

BLOOMING MARVELLOUS

Turn a bunch of flowers into a focal point by adding extra greenery and a quirky budgie and placing them in a large, textured vase. Take a few floral stems and add to a small, jar-like vessel. A brass frame creates a statement look.

LEFT: Kiko brass picture **frame**, £14.95, Nkuku. **Ribbon**, as before. Brass frame **house**, £32.95, Rigby & Mac. Recycled glass bud **vase**, £12.50 for 2, Garden Trading. Rounded pleated **vase**, £30, Graham and Green. White **budgie**, £14, Rockett St George

Stylish sanctuary

From inspiration to installation, quality craftsmanship to expert aftercare, you'll find everything you need to create a blissful bathroom at bathstore



'The finest materials and cutting-edge technology bring style and substance to your bathroom'



For modern lines, opt for the sleek Openwater floorstanding bath filler with handset



Wash away the day in the bathroom of your dreams. At bathstore, you'll find plenty of savvy storage solutions to help you create and maintain a bathroom that's mess-free and stress-free.

The sleek and contemporary fitted units of the Portfolio Gloss range (above) make the most of space, transforming even the tiniest of bathrooms, while clever lighting ideas ensure the mood is just right for relaxation. Add a freestanding bath and you can enjoy

the luxury of a hotel getaway at home.

Whatever your style or size of space, bathstore has a solution. In fact, you'll be spoilt for choice. But with online guides to help you choose the products you need, expert advice and a free in-store 3D design service, you're sure to find the bathroom that's just right for you.

You can have yours delivered in as little as 48 hours, and the craftsmanship of bathstore's expert installation service is guaranteed for 5 years, making your project as hassle-free as possible.

For more information and to find your nearest store, visit bathstore.com. There are 173 stores nationwide, where you can experience the products, speak to the experts, and utilise the free in-store 3D design service.

bathstore
Bathrooms matter. Visit the experts.



How to create CALM



Sarah Beeny's tips on creating a soothing environment mean you can swap the chaos for a serene sanctuary. Yes, really!

ADD A TOUCH OF TEXTURE

Soft furnishings are essential in creating a welcoming home. The key is to have enough, but not too much. They are meant to add a 'touch' – not be the items the room is built around. Mix and match textures rather than colours. Good-quality man-made materials can be great, but beware of substandard ones, as they tend to look synthetic. Some faux furs work well and are affordable, but when it comes to emulating silk, ensure you use a really good synthetic material. Finally, add a throw or blanket in the winter months to use when you watch TV.

THE FIRST IMPRESSION

Your hall or lobby is the first area people will see when they walk through the door, so a really nice light fitting is worth the expense. Wall lights are fantastic if the space is wide enough, and it's also a great place for a favourite artwork or collection of photos or china plates. Don't let it become a dumping ground – there are great cupboards that fit under stairs or even into each step to hide things away. A pretty key rack is also a simple way of utilising the space and making it feel more homely (but for security, make sure it can't be reached or seen through the letterbox). If you can create an area in the hallway that makes people stop for just a moment or two, you'll have produced an extra room from a dead area. Not only will you benefit from the additional space, you'll also increase the property's value when you come to sell.

KITCHEN CLEVER

When it comes to kitchens, keep them clutter-free. Cupboards are key, as are the systems within the cupboards so that everything has a home. Make your life easier by getting big bowls – one for fruit, one for fresh veg and another for useful items, such as keys and pens. When you are fitting a new kitchen, list everything that needs to fit in it to avoid the 'chaotic look' – don't forget your phone and computer, bins, chargers, toaster, kettle, herbs, food processor and washing-up stuff. The more that can be hidden away, the calmer your kitchen will be.



🏠 PILLOW TALK

Never stint on the number of pillows in a bedroom. Even if you don't like sleeping with lots of them, they make a bed look more inviting. A thick duvet with a white cotton cover works wonders. However, avoid masses of scatter cushions – if you spend 20 minutes moving them every day, you'll waste more than five days a year just rearranging them! If you have books, fit shelves or get a free-standing bookshelf. And if you really want a TV, make sure it can be concealed when you aren't watching it, either with a wall hanging or in a cupboard.

🏠 A COSY LIVING ROOM

A living room is where you relax, so a fitted carpet is a good idea as it keeps it warm. For a friendly feel, use lots of lamps rather than ceiling lights – antiques can add character, while also retaining their value. But try to avoid second-hand sofas and opt for new instead – an older piece is likely to be less comfy and may require pricey reupholstering. Side tables are essential for holding drinks, but also look fantastic when displaying a chessboard. And a wood-burning stove not only cuts your central heating bill – it also provides a cosy real fire. Lastly, a musical instrument, such as a piano or guitar, can give a room a homely vibe.

🏠 CREATE A HAVEN

Underfloor heating is genius in a bathroom – you can get fit-your-own kits, which I've used myself and would recommend. Use warmer yellow bulbs in lights rather than cooler blue ones

and get a dimmer switch. Avoid air fresheners – they may claim to smell of 'summer breeze' but you'll get a more believable version by opening the window. Ensure there is good storage so toiletries are not on display but are on hand for bathing or showering.

🏠 MEMORY LANES

I constantly battle my husband Graham over balancing personal touches with clutter, as I love showing off the kids' stuff! We have found compromises, though: a shelf in our bedroom is crammed with their creations, and our playroom has floor-to-ceiling frames featuring their artwork. But they're all mounted, so it's a different look to having pictures Blu-Tacked to walls. Being an artist, Graham feels it sets the bar higher for them to improve their drawing skills! Try to keep the really sentimental bits that are not so nice to look at (such as teeth left behind by the tooth fairy) a little out of the way.

🏠 GET GROWING

In winter, we look into our home rather than outside, so having something growing on display can fill a room with life. If plants such as areca palms are well maintained, they are perfect choices. But avoid mixing too many colours – just stick to green and one other colour per room. I love daffodils – they look lovely and symbolise spring. Bluebells are beautiful, too, and I like their untameable nature. The smell of walking through a bluebell wood is something you never forget – so lovely to bring indoors.



🏠 ROOM WITH A HUE

I'm a fan of green – it's so versatile and can work with a variety of styles. I also like a 'one-colour' look, as well as wallpaper – but make sure you pick your colour carefully...

Use different colours to create a sense of calm in all areas of the house

YELLOW

Used in a kitchen, it looks absolutely fantastic in the morning light.

RED

Ideal for a dining room – its relaxing vibe apparently aids digestion.

BLUE

Has a soothing effect, making it the perfect choice for a sitting room.

PINK/PURPLE

Striking or serene, both colours work well for bathrooms or bedrooms.

Best of both worlds



Ann Marie and Michael Robinson were on the hunt for a contemporary new-build until they discovered a former railway cottage next door to a cinema...

Long walks in the country, watching films and visiting art exhibitions are favourite pastimes of Ann Marie and Michael Robinson, so when they saw a house for sale midway between a beautiful river bank, a cinema and an art gallery, they were thrilled.

'We'd walked past the house many times but never thought we would end up living here,' says Ann Marie.

The house in Richmondshire, North Yorkshire, had been well cared for and was the ideal size for magistrate Ann Marie and lawyer Michael, who wanted to downsize now their sons were at university.

'After living in a period house in Bowes, County Durham, for 10 years, we were looking for a complete contrast,' says Ann Marie. 'Then we saw this and fell in love with its location. We decided we could have the best of both worlds by living in a Grade II-listed former railway cottage but creating a modern interior.'

'I spent a lot of time looking through magazines for inspiration, then asked my friend Karen Dammone, an interior architect, to fine-tune my ideas to make the house look as modern as possible.'

It evolved partly around Ann Marie and Michael's collection of paintings.

'I wanted certain paintings grouped together in certain rooms. At first, we thought white walls throughout would show them at their best, but we gradually came round to the fact that

'The house retains its character but now has a modern style'

the house needed colour to warm it up,' says Ann Marie, who opted for a softer shade of Farrow & Ball Cornforth White in most rooms. 'We also spent a lot of time choosing accent lighting to create atmosphere in every room.'

The biggest challenge was the north-facing kitchen, where a small window further restricted natural light. So the Robinsons got planning permission to move this and double its size, which immediately transformed the room.

'We went for white fittings and no wall units to make everything light and modern,' says Ann Marie. The white decor is offset by a bespoke natural ➔



SITTING ROOM

Ann Marie's favourite item of furniture is this armchair covered in Designers Guild Varese-Alchemilla fabric from John Lewis.



SITTING ROOM

'We mixed old furniture we have had for years, such as the coffee table, with new pieces,' says Ann Marie.



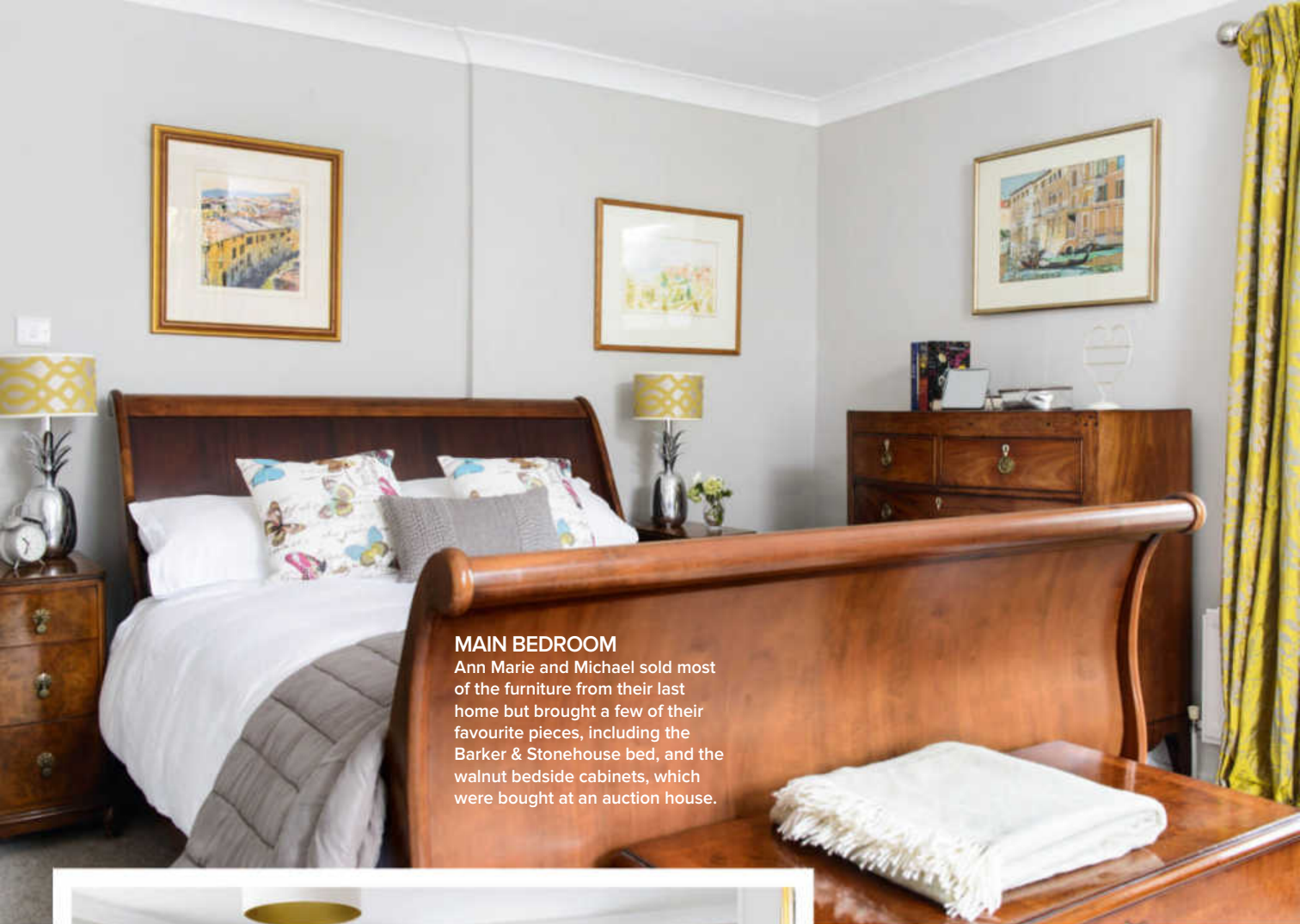
KITCHEN

A stud wall was removed to make the L-shaped space square. The bright green pictures and accessories add splashes of colour.



KITCHEN

Ann Marie and Michael replaced the old kitchen's dark units with white ones and added grey tiles for a light, airy look.



MAIN BEDROOM

Ann Marie and Michael sold most of the furniture from their last home but brought a few of their favourite pieces, including the Barker & Stonehouse bed, and the walnut bedside cabinets, which were bought at an auction house.



wood breakfast table and green pictures.

The layout in the rest of the house remained unchanged, but Ann Marie had the dilemma of reducing their furniture without losing favourite items.

'We had to decide which pieces we couldn't bear to part with and which would work with the style and proportions of the new house. In the end, after selling and giving pieces away, we only had a few favourites left. We have mixed these with new modern

furniture to create a contemporary style with warm, classic touches.'

It took around three months to update the house, and a further two months to finish the details. 'Although we were looking for a new-build, this house has turned out to be a great compromise,' says Ann Marie. 'We have the character of an older place and the style of a 21st-century home – with the added bonus of things we love doing on our doorstep.'



BATHROOM

The couple kept the original bathroom but updated it by painting the walls with Farrow & Ball Cornforth White.



GUEST BEDROOM

The armchair is from Ann Marie's previous house but its soft tones complement the Cornforth White walls and cosy fireplace.



TWIN BEDROOM

White and soft shades of taupe create a tranquil atmosphere.

Feature and styling: GAP Interiors/Heather Dixon Photos: GAP Interiors/Colin Poole Shopping compiled by: Grace Allen

Pineapple complete **lamp**, £75, Laura Ashley

Square daybed **table** in warm elm, £475, Furnish

Velvet **cushion**, £32, Oliver Bonas

Classical white Louis XV **chest**, £459, Sweetpea & Willow

Kane yellow fabric **armchair**, £395, Habitat

This armchair will brighten up your sitting room!

Get Ann Marie's eclectic look

Knitted **pouffe**, £65, Matalan

Lime green **bowl**, £4.99, Amazon

Xavier Pauchard Tolix-style **dining chair**, £79.99, Tesco

Boxes, £7 for 3, Hema

Rug by Riley Ave, £19.99, Wayfair

Jansen + co loop espresso **cup and saucer**, £17.50, Houseology

Provence **bedstead**, £1,299, Feather & Black

Girl about the house

Now's the time to give your home a really deep clean, remove stubborn dust and get your windows sparkling



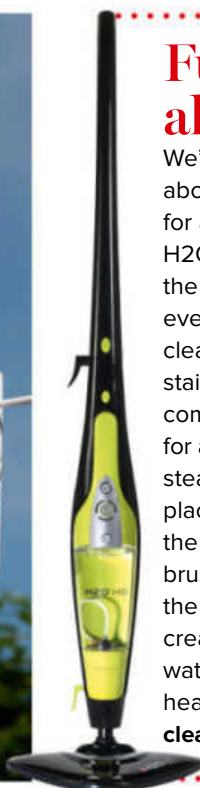
LET'S HANG OUT

Spring's here and it's lovely to hang washing outside as soon as the sun is shining. Peg bags and pretty pegs go some way to making the job all the more enjoyable – and that's why we can't get enough of these fancy floral numbers (£4.95 for 12, Dotcomgiftshop).



Full steam ahead

We've been hearing about the power of steam cleaning for a while and, after testing the H2O HD, we get why. This is one of the most versatile systems we've ever come across! Not only does it clean your hard floors and remove stains to revitalise carpets, but it comes with plenty of attachments for around the house. The handheld steamer tackles sinks and tricky places to clean on your hob. Add the extension hose and window brush for spotless windows or the garment head when you want crease-free clothing. The 450ml water tank is easily removed and it heats up fast, too. **H2O HD steam cleaner**, £109.99, Thane



Feature: Emma Morton-Turner Photos: Getty, Alamy, Hearst Magazines UK

Tricky problem – solved!

Have you ever looked behind your radiators? Most of us know it's a deep, dark world of dirt back there and we avoid it at all costs! These radiator brushes (£13.95 each, Eddingtons at Amazon) are the perfect way to keep them dust-free, in turn making radiators work more effectively by allowing air to flow more freely. They're great for reaching high up places elsewhere, too.



SHINE AND SHEEN

Looking to get your high-gloss kitchen cupboards spotlessly shiny or your worktops as clean as can be? Then grab a bottle of Method's deliciously scented pomegranate All-Purpose surface cleaner (£3, Tesco). Made from all-natural ingredients, this powerful cleaner can handle any grease and dirt. A washing-up liquid and hand wash are also available in the range.



CADDY COOL

There aren't many of us who like to do the washing and cleaning, so it's no surprise that our cleaning products tend to stay out of sight and blissfully out of mind. Not any more! These stylish caddies are the perfect place to decant your powders, house containers and smarten up your household chores. We love the sleek lines and colours. **Clean tin**, £14.99; **pegs tin**, £8.99; **laundry tin**, £12.99, all Marlo Storage at Harbour Living





BE A NATURAL WOMAN!

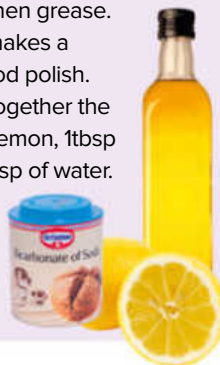
Run out of cleaning products but on a mission to spring clean? No need to go shopping – these four natural ingredients can help get your home looking spick and span in no time...

● **Vinegar's** acidic qualities make it a great all-round cleaner. Opt for a less pungent white vinegar. Make a solution of 50/50 water and vinegar in a spray bottle and apply liberally to kitchen work surfaces. Wipe clean with a cloth.

● **Lemons** are also acidic and work well on removing dirt from bathroom sinks as well as dishes. Add salt for stubborn watermarks on taps.

● **Bicarbonate of Soda** is a deodoriser and, wrapped in a piece of kitchen towel, will make the smelliest of shoes fresh as a daisy. Mix with water to make a paste for cutting through kitchen grease.

● **Olive oil** makes a fantastic wood polish. Simply mix together the juice from 1 lemon, 1tbsp of oil and 1tbsp of water. Use a clean cloth to whip up a shine.



TIME FOR A TEA BREAK

Flakes of limescale floating in your kettle doesn't make for the most appealing cuppa. To make the inside look as good as new, pour in white vinegar to cover the limescale watermark and boil it once. Rinse out and repeat, if necessary. Otherwise, fill to the top with water, boil then discard the water. Now you're ready for a fresh brew.



Dust, begone!

If you've ever struggled to clean intricate ornaments, you'll love these **Touch To Clean microfibre gloves** (£10 a pair, Harts of Stur). Just pop them on and give your shelves – and everything on them – a wipe. They're super absorbent and can be thrown in the washing machine after use.



2 GREAT NEW VACS!

1 BRAVE NEW WORLD

If we told you that you could vacuum your home every day without lifting a finger, you'd jump at the chance, wouldn't you? Well, the amazing **iRobot Roomba980** (£899, Appliances Direct) does just that. Yes, it's pricey but it will map your floors, memorise obstacles, re-dock when it's low on power and then resume where it left off.

You can even control it from your phone!



2 PAWS FOR THOUGHT...

Whether you're a pet owner or not, it's worth knowing that pet-friendly vacuums are the best around. Equipped with turbo brushes, clean air filters and a dust bag, the **Miele Complete C3 Cat and Dog PowerLine Vacuum Cleaner** (£270) will remove the toughest dirt and dust from any floor covering. Plus, the 11m cable means you'll never run out of power. It's the best we've tested!



Relaxed, springtime FEAST

Want to enjoy laid-back dining with family and friends? Permission granted with this easy pot roast and make-ahead dishes!



NO-COOK/MAKE AHEAD

Crab & artichoke salad

A riot of colour and flavour to really get the taste buds going.

SERVES 8 PREP 10min TOTAL COST £14.06

- 2 x 100g bags pea shoots
 - ½ cucumber, halved lengthways, deseeded and then sliced into half-moon shapes
 - 2 heads of chicory, trimmed and leaves separated
 - 300g jar artichokes, drained and roughly chopped
 - 700g (1½lb) fresh white crabmeat (or use white and brown, if you like)
 - 250g vacuum-packed ready-cooked beetroot, diced
 - Edible flowers, to garnish (optional)
- FOR THE DRESSING
- 6tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 - 5cm (2in) piece of fresh ginger, peeled and grated
 - 2tbsp white wine vinegar
 - Pinch of sugar
 - Juice of ½ lemon, plus slices to garnish
- 1** First make the dressing by mixing together all the ingredients. Season to taste and set aside.
- 2** Divide the pea shoots, cucumber and chicory between 8 serving plates. Drizzle over a little dressing.
- 3** Top with the artichokes and crabmeat, then scatter over the beetroot. Add a little more dressing, or serve it on the side. To serve, arrange the edible flowers, if using, on each plate and add lemon slices.
- PER SERVING: CALS 225; FAT 13g; SAT FAT 2g; CARBS 5g

Try this

You can grow your own edible flowers, such as nasturtiums and pansies, to use as garnish.

Pot roast leg of lamb with spices, onion & peas

Once in the oven, the lamb cooks for hours, so it's wonderfully tender and melts in the mouth when cooked.

SERVES 8-10

PREP 15min COOK 4hr

TOTAL COST £22

(depending on where you buy it)

- 2kg (4½lb) leg of lamb
- 3 cloves of garlic, peeled and sliced
- 1tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1tsp dried mint
- Handful of fresh mint leaves, roughly chopped (reserve some for serving)
- 2tsp ground cinnamon
- 1tbsp pomegranate molasses
- Handful of fresh thyme leaves, plus extra sprigs
- 500g bag baby onions, peeled
- 500ml (18fl oz) white wine
- 1.1 litre (2 pint) of hot vegetable stock
- 2 large handfuls of frozen peas

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan) mark 6. Sit the lamb in a large, heavy, ovenproof, lidded pot. Using a sharp knife, make slashes all over the lamb and stuff with the garlic. Mix together the oil, dried and fresh mint, cinnamon, pomegranate molasses and thyme leaves. Season well and rub

Try this

If you don't have a pot that's big enough, use a large roasting tin and cover with foil.



the mixture all over the lamb.

2 Add the onions and wine to the pot, season and scatter over most of the thyme sprigs. Take off the lid and cook in the oven for 30min or until the lamb has browned a little. Then, turn down the oven to 170°C (150°C fan) mark 3.

3 Pour in the stock and add the peas. Put on the lid and cook for about 3hr 30min, or until your lamb is cooked to your liking. Baste the lamb with the juices every hour, topping up with more stock or hot water, if needed. Once cooked, remove from the oven

and leave to sit for 15min before sprinkling over the remaining mint leaves and thyme sprigs. Carve at the table, and serve with the juices, onions and peas.

PER SERVING: CALS 388; FAT 18g; SAT FAT 7g; CARBS 7g ➔

VEGETARIAN

Savoury red onion bread & butter pudding

Serve this to vegetarian guests or as a great accompaniment to the lamb.

SERVES 8 PREP *15min* COOK *40min*
TOTAL COST *£6.12*

- 1tbsp olive oil
- 2 red onions, roughly chopped
- Few sprigs of thyme, leaves picked
- About 10 slices of bread (crusts on), lightly buttered and cut into triangles
- 200g (7oz) Lancashire cheese, crumbled
- 500ml (1 pint) milk
- 4 medium eggs, lightly beaten
- Handful of fresh chives, chopped

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) mark 4. Heat the oil in a frying pan, then add the onions and thyme. Cook for few mins until softened, then remove from the heat and set aside.

2 Arrange the bread in layers in a large ovenproof dish, then season. Sprinkle over the cheese and the onion mixture, tucking them in and around the bread.

3 Mix together the milk and eggs, season, then stir in the chives. Slowly pour the mixture over the bread until it's just covered. Cook in the oven for 40min, or until puffed up, golden and cooked through. Remove from the oven and serve immediately.

PER SERVING: CALS 328; FAT 16g; SAT FAT 8g; CARBS 29g



Try this
Most cheese is vegetarian these days, but it's best to check the packaging first.



Griddled asparagus with mint

Cooking asparagus this way retains its sweetness and bite.

SERVES 8 PREP *5min* COOK *15min* TOTAL COST *£7.98*

- About 3 bunches of medium-size asparagus, trimmed
- 2tbsp olive oil
- Large handful of fresh mint, leaves picked, to serve

1 Heat a griddle pan until hot. Toss the asparagus in the oil.

2 When the pan is hot enough, add the asparagus in batches – don't overcrowd the pan. Cook for 4-6min, turning halfway through, until just starting to char. Transfer to a serving plate and scatter over the mint leaves to serve.

PER SERVING: CALS 48; FAT 3g; SAT FAT 0.5g; CARBS 1.5g

Fennel, lemon & olive roasties

These potatoes are super-crisp and crunchy, with a subtle flavour that complements the lamb. Everyone will be piling up their plates!

SERVES 8 PREP *15min* COOK *40min* TOTAL COST *£3.04*

- 900g (2lb) potatoes, peeled and cut into even chunks
- 2tbsp olive oil
- 1-2tsp fennel seeds
- 1-2 lemons, roughly chopped into even pieces
- Small sprig of rosemary, leaves picked
- Large handful of green olives

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan) mark 6. Add the potatoes to a large roasting tin and pour over the oil. Add the fennel seeds, lemons and rosemary, season with sea salt and toss together.

2 Roast in the oven for about 30min, until just starting to colour.

Remove, add the olives, then return the dish to the oven for a further 10min, or until the potatoes are golden and crispy.

Remove from the oven and transfer to a serving dish.

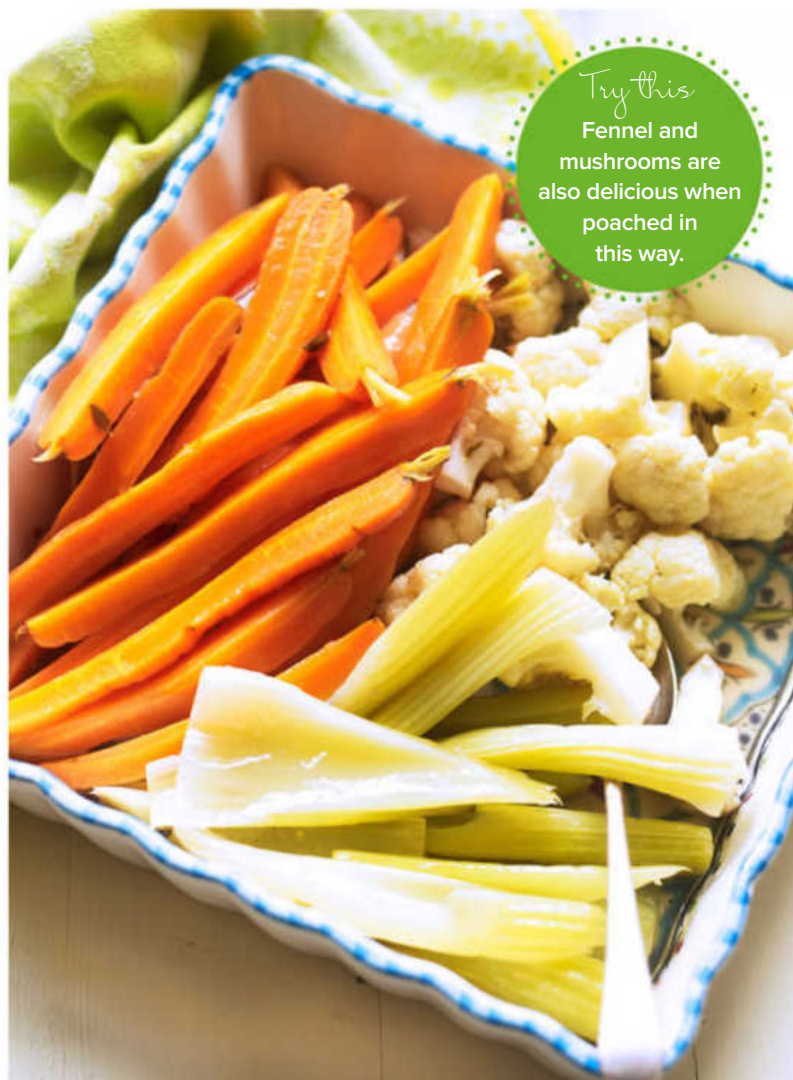
PER SERVING: CALS 126; FAT 3g; SAT FAT 0.5g; CARBS 21g



MAKE AHEAD

Vegetables à la Grecque

This recipe keeps all the colour and crunch of the veg. Perfect for a spring lunch!



SERVES 8 PREP *15min* COOK *15min*
TOTAL COST *£5.96*

- 1 large cauliflower (or use 2 small), broken into florets
 - 900g (2lb) spring carrots, sliced lengthways
 - Head of celery, trimmed and roughly chopped, or use celery hearts
- FOR THE POACHING LIQUID
- 500ml (18fl oz) white wine
 - 2tbsp olive oil
 - Juice of ½ lemon
 - 2tsp coriander seeds
 - Handful of black peppercorns
 - Few sprigs of fresh thyme, leaves picked

1 First make the poaching liquid: fill a pan with enough water to cover the veg, then add the ingredients, season, and bring to the boil.

2 Add the cauliflower and carrots, cover with a lid and simmer for 3min. Add the celery and simmer for a further 3-5min, or until the vegetables are just tender and still have crunch. Remove the vegetables with a slotted spoon and, if making ahead, cover and place in the fridge to cool overnight (reserve the liquid).

3 When ready to serve, bring the liquid to the boil. Return the vegetables to the pan to heat through, then remove with a slotted spoon and transfer to a serving dish. Bubble the liquid for a few mins, and ladle a little over the veg.

PER SERVING: CALS 75; FAT 0g; SAT FAT 0g; CARBS 11g ➔

GLUTEN-FREE

Flourless chocolate cake

This is a showstopper of a dessert. It's rich and indulgent, but not too heavy – and is heavenly with crème fraîche.

SERVES 10 PREP 20min

COOK 45min TOTAL COST £11.82

- 3 x 100g bars of dark chocolate (70% cocoa), broken into pieces
- 300g (11oz) butter
- 8 medium eggs, separated
- 300g (11oz) golden caster sugar

FOR THE TOPPING

- Icing sugar, sifted, for dusting
- 400g bag frozen fruits of the forest, defrosted (reserve some for decoration)
- Few edible flowers, for decoration (optional)
- Crème fraîche, to serve

YOU WILL NEED A 23cm (9in) round, springform, loose-bottom tin, lightly greased with butter and lined with baking parchment

1 Preheat the oven to 170°C (150°C fan) mark 3. Add the chocolate and butter to a heatproof bowl and sit it over a pan of barely simmering water, making sure that the bowl doesn't touch the water. Stir occasionally until melted and mixed; set aside to cool.

2 Add the egg whites to a food mixer and whisk until they begin to form peaks. Transfer to another bowl and set aside. Add the egg yolks and sugar to the food mixer and whisk until creamy and doubled in size.

3 Fold the cooled, melted chocolate into the egg yolk mixture until combined. Add a few spoonfuls of egg white to loosen it, then fold in the remainder until it is completely combined. Pour into the prepared tin and bake in the oven for 40-45min, or until set on top. Remove from the oven and leave to cool in the tin. Once cool, run a knife around the edge of the tin to release the cake. Transfer to a serving plate, dust with icing sugar and pile the fruit in the centre. Scatter over the flowers, if using, and serve with crème fraîche. PER SERVING: CALS 584; FAT 37g; SAT FAT 22g; CARBS 52g



Try this

Add a drop of crème de cassis to the cake mixture, or drizzle over the fruit to serve.



Unilever

SHOW PASTA SOME *Passion*

Gennaro has long stirred a mixture of butter and olive oil into his pasta. It's a little Italian trick passed down through generations to add flavour and a silky smooth taste. Bertolli with Butter is the perfect blend with butter and olive oil. Try stirring some into your freshly cooked pasta today.



A blend with butter (22%), olive oil (21%) and other vegetable oils.

Easter treats

Sweet INSPIRATION

Showstopper bakes and home-made chocolate eggs are a tasty way to spoil family and friends for Easter and beyond



Easter cupcakes

Decorate these buttercream-decorated lemon sponges with bunnies and eggs.

MAKES 12 CUPCAKES

PREP 40min COOK 25min

- 125g (4½oz) butter, at room temperature
- 125g (4½oz) golden caster sugar
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 125g (4½oz) self-raising flour
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon

FOR THE SYRUP

- 2tbsp lemon juice
- 50g (2oz) caster sugar

FOR THE ICING

- 75g (3oz) butter
- 200g (7oz) icing sugar
- 2 chocolate Flake bars
- 50g (2oz) mini candy-coated Easter eggs (we used Mini Eggs)
- A few drops of green food colouring
- 6 mini chocolate bunnies
- Iced sugar blossoms

YOU WILL NEED A cupcake tin lined with paper cases, 2 piping bags and a small star-shaped nozzle

1 Heat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) mark 4. Put the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl and beat with a wooden spoon or electric whisk until the mixture is light and fluffy.

2 Add the eggs, a little at a time, beating well after each addition. Add 1-2tbsp flour, if necessary, to prevent the mixture from curdling. Fold in the remaining flour, lemon zest and juice.

3 Divide the mixture between the cases; bake for 20-25min until golden.

4 To make the syrup, stir the lemon juice into the sugar, then pour over the cakes while warm. Remove from the tin; leave to cool on a wire rack.

5 To make the icing, beat together the butter and icing sugar with 1-2tsp boiling water until smooth. Place half in a piping bag, snip off the end and pipe a swirl around the edge of 6 cupcakes. Cut up the Flake bars and arrange on top with the Mini Eggs.

6 Mix the food colouring with the remaining icing and place in a piping bag fitted with a star-shaped nozzle. Pipe stars on to the other 6 cakes to make 'grass'. Top with bunnies and sugar blossoms. The cupcakes will keep for 3-4 days in a cake tin.



Hot cross scones

These are so quick and easy to make, you can bake a batch on Easter morning so everyone can enjoy them warm from the oven.

MAKES 6 LARGE SCONES

PREP 15min COOK 18min

- 225g (8oz) self-raising flour
- 75g (3oz) butter
- 4tbsp caster sugar
- 75g (3oz) sultanas
- ½tsp mixed spice
- 1 medium egg
- Around 100ml (4fl oz) milk

FOR THE CROSSES

- 25g (1oz) plain flour

YOU WILL NEED A 7.5cm (3in) round biscuit cutter, a baking tray and plastic piping bag

1 Heat oven to 200°C (180°C fan) mark 6. Put the self-raising flour in a bowl and rub in the butter

until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add the sugar, sultanas and mixed spice.

2 Break the egg into a jug and make up to 100ml (4fl oz) with milk. Pour into the flour mixture and mix to a soft dough. Turn out on to a lightly floured work surface, knead lightly, then pat into a round about 3cm (1¼in) thick. Cut out 4 or 5 scones and place on a baking tray. Re-roll the trimmings to make 1 or 2 more.

3 To make the crosses, mix the plain flour with about 1tbsp water and mix to a thick paste. Put in a piping bag, snip off the end and pipe a cross on top of each scone.

4 Bake the scones for about 18min, or until golden brown and risen. Leave to cool on a wire rack. When ready, serve with butter. The scones are tastiest on the day they're made or split and toasted the next day. ➔



Rocky road

These triple-chocolate squares will hit the spot for any chocoholic.

MAKES ABOUT 20 SQUARES

PREP 20min, plus cooling and setting COOK 5min

- 400g (14oz) white chocolate
 - 100g (4oz) shortbread fingers, roughly chopped
 - 150g (5oz) mini marshmallows
 - 150g (5oz) Mini Eggs
 - 9g pack freeze-dried raspberry pieces
 - 30g pack white chocolate snowies
- YOU WILL NEED An 18cm (7in) square tin, lined with clingfilm

- 1 Break up the white chocolate and place in a bowl over a pan of simmering water, making sure the bowl doesn't touch the water. Stir until melted, remove from the heat and leave to cool for 10min.
- 2 Stir the shortbread into the melted chocolate, along with the remaining ingredients, reserving a few marshmallows, Mini Eggs, raspberry pieces and snowies to decorate the top. Add the mixture to the tin, spreading it out, then sprinkle over the reserved ingredients. Set in the fridge for 30min, then turn out and cut into chunks. It'll keep for 1 week in a tin.

Cookies and cream cake

A delicious malted chocolate cake filled with a cookie-and-cream icing. Perfect for afternoon tea on Easter Sunday.

SERVES 12 PREP 40min COOK 25min

- 300g (11oz) butter, at room temperature
 - 300g (11oz) golden caster sugar
 - 6 medium eggs, beaten
 - 225g (8oz) self-raising flour
 - 25g (1oz) malt-flavoured drinking powder (we used Horlicks)
 - 50g (2oz) cocoa powder, sifted
- FOR THE ICING

- 200g (7oz) butter, softened
- 400g (14oz) icing sugar
- 1tbsp malt-flavoured drinking powder
- ½tsp vanilla extract
- 3-4 dark chocolate, cream-filled biscuits (we used Oreos)
- Candy-coated Mini Eggs

YOU WILL NEED 3 x 18cm (7in) round sponge tins, greased and base-lined with baking parchment

- 1 Heat oven to 180°C (160° fan) mark 4.
- 2 Put the butter and caster sugar in a mixing bowl and beat with a wooden spoon or electric whisk until the mixture is light and fluffy.
- 3 Add the eggs, a little at a time, beating well after each addition. Add 1-2tbsp flour, if necessary, to prevent the mixture from curdling. Fold in the remaining flour, malt-flavoured powder and cocoa until evenly mixed.
- 4 Divide the mixture equally between the cake tins and bake for 20-25min, until just firm to the touch.
- 5 To make the icing, beat together the butter, icing sugar, malt-flavoured drinking powder and vanilla with 1-2tsp boiling water until smooth and creamy. Finely crush the biscuits until almost a powder, then stir into the buttercream.
- 6 Sandwich together the cakes using a little icing. Cover the top and sides with a very thin layer of icing (this will help to prevent the cake from crumbling). Chill the cake for 10min, then apply a second layer of icing. Top with the Mini Eggs and serve in thin slices. The cake will keep in a cake tin for 1 week. ➔



Try this

Don't have three tins? Bake one or two cakes first, leave to cool, then bake the remaining.

Try this

You can decorate the top of the Battenberg with Mini Eggs instead of flowers, if you like.

Lemon and rose Battenberg

This pretty sponge cake wrapped in marzipan makes for a tasty teatime.

SERVES 8 PREP 40min

COOK 35min

- 225g (8oz) butter, softened
- 225g (8oz) caster sugar
- 4 medium eggs, beaten
- 150g (5oz) self-raising flour
- ½tsp baking powder
- 75g (3oz) ground almonds

- Grated zest and juice of ½ lemon
 - Few drops of pink food colouring
 - 3-4 drops of raspberry food flavouring (optional; available from Lakeland)
 - 4-5 heaped tbsp seedless raspberry jam
- TO DECORATE
- Icing sugar, to dust

- 500g pack white marzipan
- A few fresh primroses
- 1 medium egg white
- 2tbsp caster sugar

YOU WILL NEED

A 20cm (8in) square cake tin, greased and lined with baking parchment, foil, small paintbrush

1 Heat oven to 180°C (160°C fan) mark 4. Cut a strip of foil 20cm x 40cm (8in x 16in) and fold in half, vertically. Holding the folded edge, fold it over 7cm (3in), then open up the foil on either side and re-crease the centre folds to make a divider. Place in the centre of the tin.

2 Add butter and sugar to a food mixer and mix until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in the eggs, adding 1-2tbsp flour, if necessary, to prevent it from curdling. Stir in the remaining flour, along with the baking powder, ground almonds, lemon zest and juice. Stir until mixed. Weigh out half the mixture and place in one side of the tin. Add pink food colouring to the rest of the mixture, plus raspberry food flavouring, if using. Spread the mixture into the other side of the tin.

3 Bake for 30-35min, remove from the oven and leave in the tin for 10min. Turn out on a wire rack to cool.

4 Once the cake is cold, trim off the crusts and cut each cake in half lengthways (use a ruler for accuracy). Trim the tops so they are level, if necessary, to create evenly-sized pieces. Spread the cake strips with jam then sandwich together a strip of lemon cake and a strip of raspberry cake. Spread the top with jam then place another two strips of cake on top, alternating the colours to create a chequerboard effect. Next, spread jam all over the cake and set aside.

5 Now it's time to decorate your cake. Dust a work surface with icing sugar and roll out the marzipan into a rectangle about 20cm x 25cm (8in x 10in). Put the cake in the centre of the marzipan. Fold the marzipan over the sponge, turn upside down and put on a cake plate (so that the seam is underneath). Trim the edges.

6 To make the sugared primroses, put the egg white in a bowl and beat lightly with a fork. Using a paintbrush, paint the flowers with egg white, then dust with caster sugar. Leave to dry on kitchen paper then arrange on the cake. It will keep for 3-4 days in a tin.

Marbled Easter eggs

Personalise these home-made Easter eggs by using different food colourings and your own piping ideas.

MAKES 4 EGGS PREP 20min, plus cooling and setting COOK 5min

- 50g (2oz) basic white chocolate
- Pink and blue gel food colourings
- 150g (5oz) dark chocolate

YOU WILL NEED: 8 hen's egg-size moulds (available from Lakeland), 2 plastic piping bags

1 Polish the inside of the moulds with soft tissues to ensure they're dry – this will help to release the chocolate easily.

2 Break up the white chocolate and put it in a small bowl. Place the bowl over a saucepan filled with a little boiling water, making sure the bowl doesn't touch the water. Leave the chocolate to melt (there's no need to heat the pan). Divide the white chocolate equally between two bowls. Stir the pink food colouring into one bowl and the blue colouring into the other. Place each mixture into a small piping bag and snip off the end. Drizzle the pink chocolate over the inside of the moulds and pipe dots with the blue chocolate. Place in the fridge for 10min to set.

3 Break up the dark chocolate and put it in a bowl over a pan of gently simmering water, making sure the bowl doesn't touch the water. Spoon a dessertspoonful of melted chocolate into each mould and swirl so it coats the sides. Leave for 10min so the chocolate cools and thickens a little, then turn upside down on a wire rack to cool (put baking parchment underneath to catch the drips of chocolate, which can be remelted, if you like). Allow to set in a cold place until firm, about 1hr – you can use the fridge, but if you have somewhere else that's cold, such as a garage, the chocolate is less likely to bloom. Put in the fridge for 10min before you want to remove the moulds. Turn moulds upside down and release the eggs by gently pressing on them.

4 To assemble the halves, place a non-stick frying pan on the heat and, when hot, add the egg halves – just for 1-2sec to melt the edges, then place the 2 halves together so they stick. Return eggs to the mould and leave to set in a cool place before serving. They'll keep for 2-3 weeks in a cool place.



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PASTA WITH PEAS,
RICOTTA AND CHIVES



FILLED AND ROLLED OMELETTE WITH
ASPARAGUS AND SMOKED SALMON ➔

Everyday cooking

Spring chicken rice

SERVES 4 PREP 10min COOK 30min TOTAL COST £9.04

Bunch of asparagus, trimmed
3tbsp olive oil
3 or 4 chicken breasts, cut into bite-size pieces
4 spring onions, trimmed and chopped
1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
Pinch of dried mint
1tsp coriander seeds, crushed
300g (11oz) basmati rice
900ml (1½ pint) hot vegetable or chicken stock
Handful each of mint leaves and pomegranate seeds

1 Heat oven to 200°C (180°C fan) mark 6. Put the asparagus in a roasting tin, toss with half the oil, and season. Roast for 15min, remove and set aside. Meanwhile, heat 1tbsp oil in a frying pan, add the chicken, season, and cook for 5-6min.



Remove and set aside.

2 Heat the remaining oil in the pan, add spring onions, chilli, dried mint and coriander and cook for 1min, then stir in the rice. Pour over the hot stock.

3 Return the chicken to the pan, put on the lid and cook for 20min until the rice is tender. Top up with hot water, if needed. Season to taste, then stir in the asparagus and mint leaves and scatter over the pomegranate seeds.

PER SERVING: CALS 502; FAT 8g; SAT FAT 1.5g; CARBS 61g

Filled and rolled omelette with asparagus and smoked salmon

MAKES 1 PREP 5min COOK 10min TOTAL COST £4.08

Generous knob of butter
2 medium eggs, lightly beaten
Handful of grated Gruyère
Small bunch of chives, chopped
Pea shoots, to serve
Lemon wedges, to serve
FOR THE FILLING
Few asparagus spears
Few slices of smoked salmon

1 First make the filling: steam the asparagus in a steamer – or in a colander set over a pan of simmering water and covered with a saucepan lid – until tender (5-6min). Remove and set aside.

2 Meanwhile, heat the butter in a pan until foaming. Season the eggs with black pepper,



stir in the cheese and chives, then pour into the pan, tilting it so the mixture reaches the edges. Leave to cook for about 1min – it should be firm around the edges but be wobbly in the middle. Remove to a plate.

3 Lay the asparagus and salmon on top of the omelette and roll it up. Cut it in half on the diagonal and serve with pea shoots and lemon wedges.

PER SERVING: CALS 474; FAT 33g; SAT FAT 15g; CARBS 4g
TRY THIS Swap the filling for chicken and avocado, or smoked trout and spinach.

New potato, spring onion and bacon crustless quiche

SERVES 4 PREP 10min COOK 30min TOTAL COST £5.29

1tbsp olive oil
4 rashers of bacon, cut into bite-size pieces
Bunch of spring onions, trimmed and finely chopped
750g (2lb ¾oz) cooked baby new potatoes, sliced
Handful of mint leaves
Handful of chives, chopped
500ml (18fl oz) milk
4 medium eggs, lightly beaten

1 Heat oven to 180°C (160°C fan) mark 4. Heat half the oil in a frying pan, add the bacon and cook for few mins until golden. Remove and set aside.

2 Wipe the pan with kitchen paper, then heat the remaining oil and add the spring onions, season, and cook for a few mins until softened.



3 Add the bacon, spring onion and potatoes to an ovenproof dish, and scatter over the herbs. Beat together the milk and eggs and pour over the bacon mixture (some of it will poke through the surface). Season with pepper then cook in the oven for 20min or until puffed up and cooked through.

4 Remove the quiche from the oven and leave to set for 10min. Slice and serve with a mixed salad.

PER SERVING: CALS 383; FAT 17g; SAT FAT 6g; CARBS 35g

Pasta with peas, ricotta and chives

SERVES 4 PREP 5min COOK 20min TOTAL COST £5.82

350g (12oz) pasta of your choice
Large handful of frozen peas, defrosted
250g carton ricotta cheese
Handful of chives, finely chopped
Handful of finely grated Parmesan
Zest of ½ lemon
Mint leaves, to garnish

1 Add the pasta to a pan of boiling salted water and cook for about 12min or according to pack instructions.

2 While the pasta is cooking, add the peas to a bowl and pour over a little boiling water. Leave for few mins, then drain and put to one side.

3 Drain the cooked pasta (reserving a little of the cooking liquid) and return it



to the pan with the cooking water, ricotta and chives. Turn to coat the pasta in the sauce. Add half the Parmesan and the lemon zest, peas and plenty of freshly ground black pepper, and stir again.

4 Serve immediately in shallow bowls, topped with the remaining Parmesan and the mint leaves.

PER SERVING: CALS 422; FAT 10g; SAT FAT 5g; CARBS 65g

TRY THIS For a change, use pecorino instead of Parmesan – it has a slightly sharper, saltier taste.





Stock up for spring

It's time to fill up your storecupboard with fresh and zesty flavours, including harissa, mint sauce, preserved lemons, seasonal chutneys – such as gooseberry – herby oils, flageolet beans and vinegars. These ingredients will work their magic when combined with seasonal delights, such as spring onions, watercress, rocket, fresh fish and lamb.

Divine eggs for Easter...

A little grown-up luxury!

① **Hotel Chocolat rocky road thick Easter egg** (£27 for 500g). Once you've made your way through the cookie shell, you can enjoy a fab selection of caramel, ganache, praline and brownie chocs. Rich and rather wonderful.



② **Bettys milk chocolate spring flowers egg** (£25 for 350g). Handmade and decorated with flowers, it looks too good to eat! Made from creamy milk choc.



③ **Biscuiteers Easter egg biscuit tin** (£30 for 9). Each buttery, egg-shaped biscuit is beautifully decorated by hand. And they come with a gorgeous keepsake tin.



GO GREEN

Japanese matcha green tea is said to boost energy and memory, so we reckon it's definitely worth a try! Unlike classic green tea, it's smooth-tasting with no bitterness and comes in a variety of flavours, including zingy ginger and mojito-style soothing peppermint and lime (below).

Bloom matcha green tea powder, from £10.99 for 30g (approx. 30 servings), bloomtea.co.uk and Holland & Barrett



Cook it, eat it, love it!

Ideas for leftover lamb

- If you don't manage to polish off your Sunday lunch, use the lamb for a divine Middle Eastern-style salad with bulgur wheat, chickpeas and mint.
- Go Mexican and pan fry shredded lamb with barbecue sauce. Serve in a warm tortilla.
- For a Peruvian twist, add to a beer and borlotti bean stew with lots of fresh coriander.

Psst... After the perfect wine to go with your lamb? **Extra Special El Mesón Rioja Gran Reserva (£9.98, Asda)** is an elegant red wine, full of plump fruit and toasted caramel flavours.



SAY CHEESE!

I adore this new **Havarti cheese** – it's incredibly nutty and sweet. It's perfect paired with cured meats and melts beautifully for a toasted sarni! This Danish cheese is matured for 12 months, which results in a rich, buttery flavour. **Castello Aged Havarti, £2.65 for 200g, Waitrose**



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SEE OVER THE PAGE FOR OUR FAB 13-PAGE MAKES SECTION



EXCLUSIVE PATTERN* from Prima & Create and Craft



THIS SEASON'S WIDE-LEG TROUSERS

You can make yours full-length or cropped, with pockets or without – they're all fabulous!

1 A flash of shoulder and head-turning heels will take these trousers into cocktail hour.

Top, £38, 8-20, Debenhams. **Earrings**, £12, Principles by Ben di Lisi at Debenhams. **Heels**, £39, 3-8, Dune

2 Wear this navy pair to work or at the weekend, with lace-up flats and nautical-style stripes.

Yellow **jumper**, £24, 8-20, Oasis. Striped **top**, £18, 8-18, M&Co. **Sunglasses**, £128, Ray-Ban at Sunglasses Shop. **Shoes**, £25, 3-8, Debenhams

3 Add a luxe tee and colour-pop accessories for the ultimate in springtime chic!

Top, £39, 8-18, John Lewis. **Clutch**, £75, The Cambridge Satchel Company. **Heels**, £89, 3-8, Jones Bootmaker

4 Up your style status by pairing silky trousers with structured sleeveless jackets.

Sleeveless **coat**, £28, 6-22, F&F. **Top**, £35, xs-xl, Great Plains. **Earrings**, £12, Principles by Ben di Lisi at Debenhams. **Heels**, £110, 3-8, Vince Camuto





Feature: Janet Palmer Photos: Pavel Dornak Styling: Helen Johnson
Hair and make-up: Anna Durston Illustrations: Terry Evans

Get making!

NEED TO KNOW

Create and Craft TV is your one-stop shop for all your sewing and knitting needs! Head to createandcraft.tv to find out more.

WOMEN'S SIZES 10-20

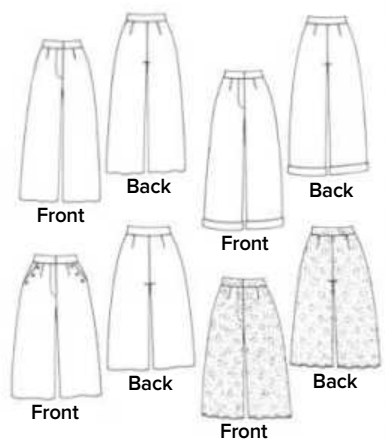
The wide-leg trousers have a shaped waistband and front zip. The long trousers can be made with or without turn-ups. The cropped version can have side front pockets with optional button trim. Instructions are also given for making the cropped trousers in lace with a lining.

FABRICS

Choose light- to medium-weight soft fabrics such as silk, linen, wool. We used navy wool blend, cream linen/wool blend, navy spot silk and navy lace with a navy lining, all from Cloth House.

INSTRUCTIONS

The pattern pieces, cutting layouts and sewing instructions are all on the Prima pattern.



TO ORDER THIS MONTH'S EXCLUSIVE PATTERN,

call 0900 140 1003* (or, from the Republic of Ireland, 1560 716 141*). If you're a subscriber and have opted in, the pattern will be included FREE every month with your copy of Prima.

*Calls cost £1.50 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge (ROI €1.28 per minute) and should last no longer than two minutes. You must be over 18 to call. UK SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390. ROI SP: Phonovation/Spoke, 014378815. Lines close midnight, 30 April 2016. PLEASE ALLOW 28 DAYS FOR DELIVERY.

For where to buy, see page 160



LISA COMFORT CUSTOMISES IT!

Add a touch of Parisian chic to a plain, white T-shirt for spring, and you'll completely transform this wardrobe classic, says Lisa

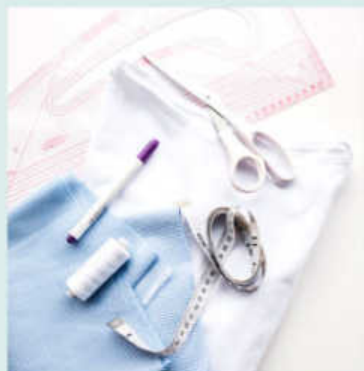


BOW & CUFFS

A white T-shirt is a bit boring, but add a bow and cuffs and, in just a few hours, you'll have a head-turning new look. What are you waiting for?

YOU WILL NEED

- 20cm of lightweight cotton
- Ruler
- Fabric pen
- White T-shirt with ¾-sleeves
- Scissors
- Pins
- Sewing machine
- Iron
- Tape measure
- Needle and thread



CUFFS: THE STEPS



1 Measure and cut a 10cm length from the cotton fabric. Divide this into two strips, both a bit more than double the width of the T-shirt's sleeve.



2 Fold the lengths in half and line up with the sleeve hem of the T-shirt. Trim them so that they're 1cm bigger than the hem to allow for seam allowance.



3 Now fold the lengths in half, right sides together, and pin the shorter ends together.

4 Stitch along the ends with a 1cm seam allowance. Turn the right way around and press flat, so that the seams are right at the edge.



5 Pin the raw edges of the cuffs to the sleeve hems. Line up the shorter ends of the cuffs with the seams of the sleeves. Stitch in place with 1cm seam allowance.



6 Iron the cuffs so that they sit flat.

BOW: THE STEPS

1 Cut an 8cm-wide strip from the cotton fabric.

2 Measure across the front of the T-shirt, from armhole to armhole, with a tape measure. Cut the strip to this length, adding 1cm at each end for seam allowance.



3 Fold the strip in half lengthways, placing right sides together. Stitch



'Add some ooh la la to a plain T-shirt'

with 1cm seam allowance. Turn through to the right side and press flat with the seam right at the edge.



4 Pin the strip on to the T-shirt, tucking under 1cm at the raw ends. Edge stitch in place at both ends.

5 Cut a strip of cotton that is 8cm wide and 25cm long. Repeat step 3 to create a neat strip. Tie into a bow.

6 Tuck the raw ends up inside the strip and edge stitch in place.



7 Create a pleat in the T-shirt 'strip' at the point where you want to attach

the bow. Hand stitch in place with a couple of catch stitches.



8 Pin the bow on to the pleat, then hand stitch it securely in place, going all the way through to the T-shirt. Et voilà!

BUNNY SIDE UP

Seasonal makes to brighten your home and add a touch of spring

Not too
tricky!



Know-how
Machine stitch
around the bunnies
and heart, turning the
fabric with the curve
and keeping the
needle in the down
position.

CUTE CUSHION

This will make a lovely Easter gift!

YOU WILL NEED

- Blunt pencil
- Fuseable double-sided interfacing
- Scissors
- Iron
- A 50cm x 70cm piece of fabric
- Scrap fabrics
- Pins
- Sewing machine
- Cushion pad

TO MAKE

1 Use bunny and heart templates (below) to draw outlines on the paper side of the double-sided interfacing. Cut out each shape, leaving a gap around the outline. Remove the paper backing before ironing the interfacing on to the back of the scraps of fabric.

2 Cut out the bunny and the heart. Lay the rectangular fabric out vertically, and position the bunnies in the centre. Use an iron without steam to 'glue' in place.

3 Use a zigzag or a blanket stitch to sew the outside edge of each piece.

You can enlarge the template to your desired size



4 To make the envelope cushion, pin and sew a 2cm hem on the top and bottom ends of the cushion fabric. Iron flat, then fold with right sides inwards, so the bunnies are in the middle and the cushion measures 30cm x 50cm. Pin in place and sew the outer sides. The hemmed sides will overlap to create the envelope.

5 Turn cushion right side round – use a pencil to push out corners. Iron flat.

6 For an Oxford-style border, pin the outside edges together and sew a line 1cm in from edge all the way around. Place a cushion pad inside.

• Cushion fabric: Jali in Aqua, £17 per metre, Clarke & Clarke

Easy make



IN FINE FEATHER

Create a talking point with your own colourful piece of artwork

YOU WILL NEED

- Feather templates
- Scissors
- Sharp scalpel and cutting board
- Pencil
- White card
- Paintbrush and watercolour paints
- 50cm x 50cm dinner plate
- Canvas
- Glue

TO MAKE

1 Cut out the feather template (right) with scissors and use to draw feather outlines on to card (20 small, 40 medium and 60 large – depending on the size of your canvas). Cut them out.

2 Create feathering details by cutting fine lines into the top of each feather, using a sharp scalpel and cutting board. Choose your colour palette and, using a paintbrush, brush feathers with paint, ensuring you use all the colours on all the sizes. Stick to 2 or 3 shades of paint for a pretty look. Set aside to dry.

3 Place a dinner plate in the centre

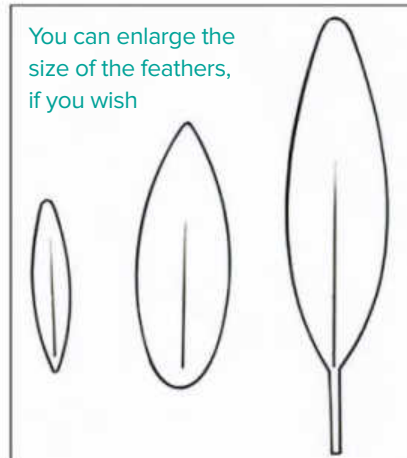
of the canvas and draw around it with a pencil. Glue larger feathers along the outline, so you create a circular shape and the pencil line is hidden.

4 Complete 1 ring of feathers, then add another just below. Move towards the centre, using smaller feathers every 2 or 3 rows.

5 Once complete, lift the tips of the feathers so they're raised on canvas. Hang on the wall or sit on a shelf.

• Canvas (50cm x 50cm), £4.99, This Works

You can enlarge the size of the feathers, if you wish



WATCH THE BIRDIE

These sweet fabric birds also look really cute as hanging decorations – just add loops of embroidery thread to the backs

YOU WILL NEED

- Bird templates
- Scissors
- Fabric scraps (different patterns but similar colours)
- Pins
- Sewing machine
- Blunt pencil
- Toy stuffing
- Small branch
- Hot glue gun

TO MAKE

1 Cut out the two bird templates (below left). With the fabric folded in half and the back against the fold, use the template to cut out the body piece of the bird on one piece of fabric. Use a different fabric to cut out the chest piece.

2 Fold the body fabric of the bird in half – right sides together. Pin in place, then sew from the back of the head to the chest.

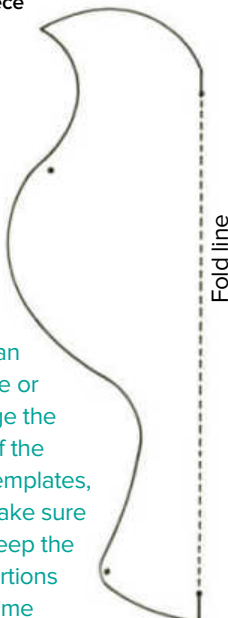
3 Open up the body and pin the chest piece in place – right sides inwards – aligning the tummy and tail sections. Sew along one side

from the tail up to the top point of the chest, then repeat on the other side. Don't attempt to do this in one go as you may end up with a hole at the join or a puckered join.

4 Snip along any curves in the fabric from the outer edge towards the sewn line. Turn the bird through to the right side. Use a blunt pencil to push the toy stuffing into the head and beak of the bird through the end of the tail.

5 Pin the tail and hand sew it closed. Attach the birds to a branch with a little glue.

Body piece



You can reduce or enlarge the size of the bird templates, but make sure you keep the proportions the same

Chest piece





GOLDEN EGGS

Kids will love helping to create these unusual flower vases

YOU WILL NEED

- Eggs
- Spoon
- Bowl
- Newspaper
- Spray paint
- Two egg boxes
- A few sprigs of flowers

TO MAKE

- 1 Remove enough shell from the top of the eggs so that flowers can fit inside, then spoon their contents into a small bowl to use later in your cooking. Rinse and dry the eggshells.
- 2 Place the dry eggshells upside down on some newspaper in a well-ventilated room. Spray with a light coating of gold metallic paint.

You should only need one coat. Leave to dry.

- 3 Place the eggshells (broken-side up) in an egg box and spray the tops with a light coat of spray paint. Leave to dry. Once dry, pour water inside each egg and add a few sprigs of small spring flowers.

• Gold metallic spray paint, £9.49 for 400ml, Rust-oleum

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BRETON JUMPER

An exclusive design for Prima

MEASUREMENTS

To fit bust 81-86(92-97:102-107)cm;
Finished measurements: Bust
102(112:122)cm; Length to shoulder
52(54:56)cm; Sleeve length
45(46:48)cm.

MATERIALS

7(8:9) 50g balls of Debbie Bliss
cotton dk in each of Fuchsia 58 (A)
and Candy Pink 73 (B).
Pair each of 3.75mm and 4mm
knitting needles.
3.75mm circular needle, 80cm long.
Call 01535 664222 for yarn stockist
details.

TENSION

20 sts and 28 rows to 10cm square
over st-st using 4mm needles.

ABBREVIATIONS

beg beginning; **cm** centimetres;
cont continue; **inc** increase; **k** knit;
m1 make one st by picking up and
working into back of loop lying
between st just worked and next st;
p purl; **rem** remaining; **rep** repeat;
RS right side; **st(s)** stitch(es); **st-st**
stocking stitch.

BACK & FRONT (both alike)

With 3.75mm needles and A, cast on
104(114:124) sts. K 3 rows. Change to
4mm needles. Beg with a k row,
work in st-st in 16-row stripe
sequence as follows: 2 rows B, 2
rows A, 4 rows B, 2 rows A, 2 rows
B, 4 rows A. Work until back/front
measures 34(35:36)cm from cast on
edge, ending with a p row.

Shape armholes

Cast off 7(8:9) sts at beg of next 2
rows. 90(98:106) sts. Cont straight in
st-st until back/front measures
49(51:53)cm from cast on edge,
ending with a p row.

Shape neck

Next row (RS) K30(33:36), turn and
cont on these sts only for first side,
leave rem sts on a spare needle.

Next row Slipping the first st, cast off
4(4:5), p to end. K 1 row. **Next row**
Slipping the first st, cast off 3(4:4), p

to end. K 1 row. **Next row** Slipping
the first st, cast off 3 sts, p to end.
K 1 row. Rep the last 2 rows once
more. Cast off rem 17(19:21) sts. With
RS facing, slip 30(32:34) sts at centre
back/front on to a holder, rejoin yarn
to rem 30(33:36) sts, k to end. P 1 row.
Next row Slipping the first st, cast off
4(4:5), k to end. P 1 row. **Next row**
Slipping the first st, cast off 3(4:4), k to
end. P 1 row. **Next row** Slipping the
first st, cast off 3 sts, k to end. Rep the
last 2 rows once more. Cast off rem
17(19:21) sts.

SLEEVES

With 3.75mm needles and A, cast on
45(49:53) sts. K 3 rows. Change to
4mm needles. Beg with a k row, work
in st-st in 16-row stripe sequence
throughout as follows: 2 rows B, 2
rows A, 4 rows B, 2 rows A, 2 rows B,
4 rows A. Work 4 rows (beg with 2
rows B). **Inc row** K2, m1, k to last 2 sts,
m1, k2. Work 5 rows. Rep the last 6
rows 8(9:10) times, then the inc row
again. 65(71:77) sts. Work straight until
sleeve measures 45(46:48)cm from
cast on edge, ending with a p row.

Place a marker at each end of last row.
Work a further 10(10:12) rows.

Shape sleeve top

Cast off 4 sts at beg of next 4 rows,
then 3 sts at beg of foll 12 rows. Cast
off rem 13(19:25) sts.

NECK EDGING

Join both shoulder seams. With
3.75mm circular needle and C, pick up
and k15(16:17) sts evenly down left front
neck, k across 30(32:34) sts at centre
front neck, pick up and k15(16:17) sts up
right front neck, 15(16:17) sts down right
back neck, k across 30(32:34) sts at
centre back neck, then pick up and
k15(16:17) sts up left back neck.
120(128:136) sts. K 1 round. P 1 round.
Change to A. K 1 round. P 1 round.
Change to B. K 1 round. Cast off
purlwise on next round.

TO MAKE UP

With centre of cast off edge of sleeve
to shoulder seam, sew sleeves into
armholes easing to fit and with
row-ends above markers sewn to sts
cast off at underarm. Join side and
sleeve seams.



Get making!

TWO-TONE JACKET

TURN THE PAGE FOR
FULL INSTRUCTIONS →

Get making!

TWO-TONE JACKET

This lightweight knit is ideal for springtime evenings

MEASUREMENTS

To fit bust 81-86(91-97:102-107:112-117:122-127)cm; Finished measurements: Width at underarm 48(53.5:59:65.5:72)cm; Length to back neck 52(54:56:58:60)cm; Sleeve length 30(31:32:32:32)cm.

MATERIALS

6(6:8:8:9) 50g balls of Rowan Softyak DK in Cream 230 (A) and 3(3:4:4:4) 50g balls in Steppe 231 (B). Pair each of 3.25mm and 4mm knitting needles. Call 01484 681881 for yarn and booklet stockist details.

TENSION

22 sts and 30 rows to 10cm square over st-st using 4mm needles.

ABBREVIATIONS

beg beginning; **cm** centimetres; **cont** continue; **dec** decrease; **fol** following; **inc** increase; **k** knit; **kfb** k into front and back of next st; **p** purl; **rem** remaining; **rep** repeat; **RS** right side; **st(s)** stitch(es); **st-st** stocking stitch; **WS** wrong side.

BACK

With 3.25mm needles and B, cast on 92(104:116:130:144) sts. K 4 rows. Change to 4mm needles. Beg with a k row, working in st-st throughout, cont as follows: Work 8 rows, ending with a p row. **Next row (RS)** Kfb, k to last 2 sts, kfb, k1. Work 9 rows. Rep the last 10 rows twice more. 98(110:122:136:150) sts. Change to A. Work 0(0:0:2:2) rows. **Next row (RS)** Kfb, k to last 2 sts, kfb, k1. Work 9(11:11:11:11) rows. Rep the last 10(12:12:12:12) rows 3 times more. 106(118:130:144:158) sts. Cont straight until back measures 46(48:50:52:54)cm, ending with a p row.

Shape shoulders

Cast off 3(4:4:5:6) sts at beg of next 12 rows. 70(70:82:84:86) sts.

Shape back neck

Next row (RS) Cast off 3(4:5:5:6) sts, k until there are 17(16:20:21:20) sts on right needle, turn and leave rem sts on a holder. Work each side of neck separately. Dec 1 st at neck edge of next 5 rows and **at same time**, cast off 4(4:5:5:5) sts at beg of the 2nd and 4th of these 5 rows. Cast off rem 4(3:5:6:5) sts. With RS facing, slip centre 30(30:32:32:34) sts onto a holder, rejoin A to rem sts and k to end. Complete to match first side, reversing shapings.

LEFT FRONT

With 3.25mm needles and B, cast on 70(76:82:89:96) sts. K 4 rows, ending with RS facing for next row. Change to 4mm needles. Beg with a k row, work in st-st as follows: Work 8 rows, ending with a p row. **Next row (RS)** Kfb, k to end. Work 9 rows. Rep the last 10 rows twice more. 73(79:85:92:99) sts. Change to A. Work 0(0:0:2:2) rows. **Next row (RS)** Kfb, k to end. Work 9(11:11:11:11) rows. Rep the last 10(12:12:12:12) rows 3 times more. 77(83:89:96:103) sts. Cont straight until left front matches Back to beg of shoulder shaping, ending with a p row. **Shape shoulder** Cast off 3(4:4:5:6) sts at beg of next row and foll 6(8:5:8:6) RS rows, then 4(–:5:–:5) sts at beg of foll 2(–:3:–:2) RS rows. Work 1 row. Cast off 4(3:5:6:5) sts turn and leave rem 44(44:45:45:46) sts on a holder for neckband.

RIGHT FRONT

Work to match Left Front, reversing shapings and working last row of shoulder shaping as follows: **Next row (WS)**: Cast off 4(3:5:6:5) sts, p to end. Slip rem 44(44:45:45:46) sts on to a holder for neckband.

SLEEVES

With 3.25mm needles and B, cast on 58(60:62:62:64) sts. K 4 rows. Change to 4mm needles. Working first 36 rows using B, then completing sleeve using A only, work as follows: Beg with a k row, work in st-st, and inc 1 st at each end of 11th(9th:7th:5th:5th) row and every foll 12th(10th:8th:6th:6th) row until there are 68(68:74:72:82) sts, then on every foll 14th(12th:10th:8th:8th) row



until there are 70(74:80:84:88) sts. Cont straight until sleeve measures 30(31:32:32:32)cm, ending with a p row. Cast off.

NECKBAND

Join shoulder seams. With RS facing, 3.25mm needles and A, k across 44(44:45:45:46) sts on right front holder, pick up and k6 sts down right back neck, k across 30(30:32:32:34) sts on back neck holder, pick up and k6 sts up left back neck, then k across 44(44:45:45:46) sts on left front holder. 130(130:134:134:138) sts. K 2 rows. Cast off knitwise on WS.

FRONT BANDS

Right front band With RS facing, 3.25mm needles and A, pick up and k114(118:124:128:132) sts evenly up right front opening edge, from cast on edge to top of neckband. K 2 rows. Cast off knitwise (on WS).

Left front band Work as given for right front band, picking up sts evenly down left front opening edge, from top of neckband to cast on edge.

TO MAKE UP

Mark points along side seam edges 17(18:19:20:21)cm either side of shoulder seams (to denote base of armholes). With centre of cast off sleeve edge to shoulder seam, sew on sleeves between markers.



Get creative with
SUE McNEILL, editor of
Prima Makes



Perfectly packaged

Fill a cute Easter-themed box, tin or basket with chocolates or mini eggs. *Decorative vintage eggs, £6.95 for 3; felt bunny basket, £3.95; tin, £3.95, all Dotcomgiftshop*



GO TO PRESS

I love this handmade book for pressing leaves, petals and flowers. It has 30 sheets of paper, which can be individually removed to help you create your designs. Each book is made to order, making it really rather special. *Herbarium, £28.75, The Typographer's Kitchen at Etsy*

*Dates for
your diary*

9-10 April

**Crafting at Ally Pally,
Alexandra Palace,
London;
alexandrapalace.com**

16-17 April

**Just Crafts Fair,
Sandringham Park,
King's Lynn, Norfolk;
sandringhamestate.co.uk**

30 April-2 May

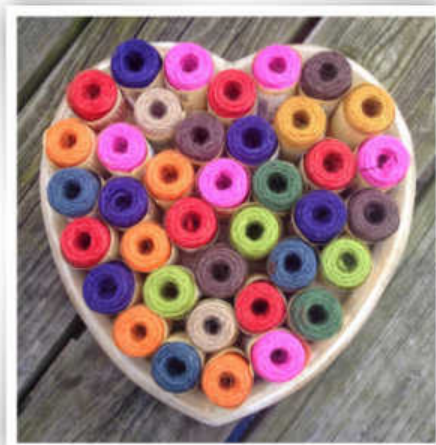
**Weald of Kent
Craft & Design Show,
Penshurst Place,
Tonbridge;
thecraftshows.co.uk**

Sew it, make it, love it!



GET THE MEASURE

This retractable floral tape measure is part of the Summer Palace range and will make a handy and pretty addition to your sewing box. *Tape measure, £6, Laura Ashley*



All tied up

Not that long ago, you could only buy green twine, which was generally used for the garden. But now twine is available in amazing colours that are perfect for craft projects, such as garlands, hanging decorations and gift-wrapping. *£3.50 for 120-metre spools, The Oak Room*

BRASSED OFF


I've just discovered these cute brass number clips from Japanese company, Midori. They are perfect for keeping your craft papers in place, and will look even better over time as they age. *10 clips, £13, Papermash*



• Your time off & time out

THIS MONTH'S BEST TV, FILMS, LIVE SHOWS AND MORE

An evening out at the movies



Scarlett Johansson in
the Coen brothers'
Hail, Caesar!

HAIL, CAESAR!

George Clooney leads an all-star cast, including Josh Brolin and Scarlett Johansson, as 1950s matinee idol Baird Whitlock in this film about Hollywood's golden age of cinema. Written and directed by the Coen brothers, Brolin plays studio fixer Eddie Mannix, who has to keep Baird's kidnap out of the papers. **Out 4 March**

EDDIE THE EAGLE

We Brits love an underdog and that was certainly the case in 1988, when the loveably eccentric Michael Edwards (AKA Eddie The Eagle) became our nation's first Olympic ski jumper at the Calgary Winter Games. The film is based on the inspirational real-life tale of Eddie, played by Taron Egerton, who was determined to bring home a medal. Hugh Jackman stars as Bronson Peary, the former champion who reluctantly became his coach. **Out 28 March**

MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING 2

Fourteen years after the first film charmed audiences worldwide, the sequel is finally here. Nia Vardalos – who wrote the original about her own experiences of growing up in the US in a loving, madcap Greek family – reprises the role of Toula, while John Corbett returns as her non-Greek husband. This time, the couple are struggling with their rebellious teenager. And another Greek wedding is on the horizon... of course! **Out 25 March**

WELCOME TO ME

Alice Klieg – played by a brilliant Kristen Wiig – suffers from borderline personality disorder, and spends her days watching infomercials and reruns of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. But one day, she wins the \$86 million jackpot on the lottery and decides that she wants to produce and star in her own daytime chat show, called *Welcome To Me*. Painfully funny and an astute observation on the modern obsession with fame. **Out 25 March**

Coming to a venue near you



Michel
Roux Jr

THE BBC GOOD FOOD SHOW

The HIC in Harrogate once again plays host to this springtime foodie Mecca. This year, the celebrity chefs in attendance include Michel Roux Jr, Tom

Kerridge, Paul Hollywood and the Hairy Bikers, who'll be on hand for interviews, live cooking demonstrations and book signings. There are also hundreds of exhibitors at the huge speciality food market, where you can sample and buy some of the freshest seasonal ingredients you've ever tasted. Tickets are available on the day or in advance. 8-10 April; bbcgoodfoodshowspring.com



The Corrs

NOCTURNE 2016 – BOOK NOW!

Although this music festival launched only a year ago, the 2016 line-up, including Sir Elton John and The Corrs, is likely to make it the summer's hot ticket. Set against the beautiful backdrop of Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, it's the ultimate outdoor venue in which The Great Court will be transformed to seat 10,000 guests. Aside from the evening gigs, you can also stroll around the grounds, have a waterside picnic or even experience fine dining in the famous State rooms. Book in advance! 23-26 June; nocturnelive.com



The Five stars O-T Fagbenle (left), Lee Ingleby, Sarah Solemani and Tom Cullen

What's on TV

THE FIVE SKY 1

This 10-part roller coaster marks the TV debut of Harlan Coben, king of bestselling thrillers. United by a terrible childhood incident in which one of their younger brothers disappeared, a group of friends is forced to revisit the event that haunted them when, years later, the missing boy's DNA turns up at a murder scene.

MAIGRET ITV

Many actors have played the iconic French detective, but this time it's Rowan Atkinson's turn in two new feature-length dramas, *Maigret Sets A Trap* and *Maigret's Dead Man*. Set in Paris and filmed in Budapest, the show looks terrific. Rowan could be the best Maigret yet!

THE DURRELLS ITV

Emigrating was almost unheard of in the 1930s when Louisa Durrell, widowed mother of the famous Gerald, moved herself and her four offspring to Corfu. This brilliant six-parter, written by Simon Nye and starring Keeley Hawes, tells the funny but often poignant story of the family's adjustment to life on the island.

BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT ITV

Until *Bake Off* last year, this was 2015's most watched show – with 12 million of us tuning in. So no wonder it's back! Ant and Dec will be dishing out hugs and humour, alongside judges David Walliams, Alesha Dixon, Amanda Holden and Simon Cowell. Bring on the golden buzzer!

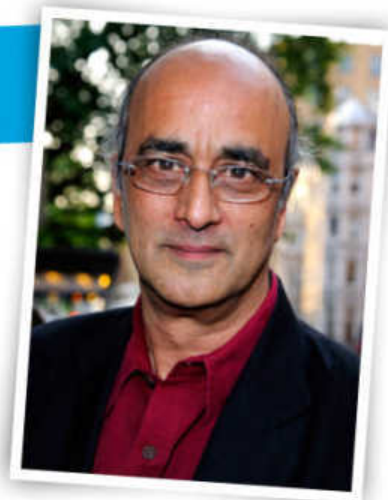


BGT's judges get set to buzz!

TEN MINUTES WITH

ART MALIK

Actor Art Malik, 63, returns to our screens this month in the Channel 4 period drama, *Indian Summers*. He has two grown-up daughters with his wife, actress Gina Rowe.



Your new role must have brought back memories of *The Jewel In The Crown* and other great Indian dramas, like *Passage To India* and *The Far Pavilions*, in which you starred?

Yes it did, but I don't apologise for returning to Indian roles, in the same way, I'm sure, that Robert De Niro doesn't apologise for playing American-Italians! This time, I'm a maharaja – and playing someone of absolute top status is always a lot of fun.

Your costumes look fantastic!

They do. But I admit that, on the first day, I had a wobble when I had to film a scene wearing layers of tailored silk and brocade, topped off with a jewelled turban, in 40-degree heat and 80% humidity! There was a moment when I went, 'Whoa!' and the next thing I was on the ground with people ripping clothes off me and showering me with cold water. I'd made the mistake of thinking that if I didn't drink I wouldn't sweat on camera. But dehydration and heat exhaustion got the better of me.

Did you get to hang out with Julie Walters, who plays Cynthia?

Yes, I did and that was lovely because I hadn't seen her since we worked together at the Bristol Old Vic back in the 1980s. At that time, she was the late Pete Postlethwaite's girlfriend and we were able to reminisce about him and the days when we'd been so young.

Did your wife Gina join you in Penang for filming?

Sadly, not. She's not a great traveller. I've only

just managed to get her to visit Africa with me, after 30 years of badgering. We had a great holiday there, but she was very happy to return to our home in Devon!

You and Gina used to be townies – how is rural life treating you?

We live just outside Dartington in a thatched cottage with a stream at the bottom of the garden! We'd got to the point where living in London just didn't suit us anymore. Plus, Gina's parents are now in their eighties and live in Plymouth, so we wanted to be nearer to them.

You now have a grandson, Arlo?

Yes, my daughter Jessica's little boy is nearly two, and he's the apple of the entire family's eye. Gina and I can't think of anything better than being asked to look after him.

Is being a grandfather different to being a dad?

Yes and no... The love is the same and there's still that sense of needing to take care of them. But you're able to enjoy them and love them in a very free and unburdened way. I can honestly say that being a grandfather is just the best thing imaginable.

How do you relax?

By cooking dinner for my family and friends. I'm also lucky that I have a shed! When I hit 60, we threw a party and I said that if anyone was stuck for what to buy me, they should bear

in mind Hornby 00 Gauge trains. Ever since I was 11, I've wanted a model railway, and now I have one in my shed. Hanging out there with those trains chugging around the track is my idea of heaven.

Art in *Indian Summers*



SOMETIMES LIES ARE TOLD IN SILENCE



FROM THE
NO. 1 BESTSELLING AUTHOR

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Happy reading

Curl up with a good book



Escape with books editor
Cathy Rentzenbrink's
top picks for the month

Six cracking reads



**THE FINDING
OF MARTHA
LOST** by
Caroline
Wallace

(Doubleday,

£12.99) Abandoned on a train as a baby, Martha has been waiting in a station's lost property department for someone to claim her – for 16 years. To pass the time, she solves mysteries.

Out 10 March



**THE
WOMAN
WHO
UPPED
AND LEFT**

by Fiona

Gibson (Avon, £7.99)

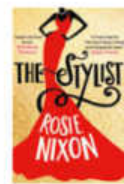
Single-parent Audrey is well aware of her responsibilities, but is tired of being taken for granted. So the time has come for some drastic action... **Out now**



**MISSING,
PRESUMED**
by Susie
Steiner

(The Borough
Press, £12.99)

DS Manon Bradshaw lands in hot water when she can't find a woman who has gone missing. Just what happened to Edith, and will Manon be able to find out? **Out now**



**THE
STYLIST**
by Rosie

Nixon (Mira,
£12.99) Shop
assistant

Amber is catapulted into the frenzy of Hollywood's awards season when she is unexpectedly given the job of styling some of the stars. Lots of fun.

Out now



**THE NIGHT
THAT
CHANGED
EVERYTHING**
by Laura Tait
and Jimmy

Rice (Corgi, £6.99) Best friends since university, Rebecca and Ben seem the perfect match until a casual comment reveals a secret from the past. Can you forgive if you can't forget? **Out 24 March**



**MARRIAGES
ARE MADE
IN BOND
STREET**
by Penrose
Halson

(Macmillan, £16.99) Fascinating true stories from the proprietor of a marriage bureau founded in 1939. The cross section of clients includes farmers seeking 'an affekshunate girl'. **Out 24 March**

6 QUESTIONS WE ASKED... CAROLINE WALLACE

Did you always want to be a writer?

Always. I started writing when I was 11, but I never had the confidence to share my stories. At university, I was the person who joined the poetry society and watched others perform, never having the courage to read my own work out loud. I was 30 before I decided it was time to be braver.

What are the best and worst things about the life of a writer?

The best thing is that I can justify buying a ridiculous amount of novelty slippers by calling them 'work clothes'. The worst thing is the self-doubt, often experienced at 2am, when the task feels too large and I feel inadequate.

Who inspires you?

People who live to tell the tale.

Can you tell us about your daily routine?

I'm at my desk by 8am. I'd love to say that I start writing straight



away but, in reality, I spend at least an hour checking online outlets, then I turn everything off and write longhand. My daily target is about 2,000 words – and I rarely finish writing in time for lunch.

What sort of books do you like to read?

I love books that pull at the heart; stories that linger weeks after they've been read, and novels with characters that I find myself missing. My favourite reads often leave me a little bit in love with their authors.

What advice would you give to someone who wants to write?

Don't let fear stop you from writing or you'll spend the rest of your life wishing you'd been a little bit braver.

My Mother's Secret

'Another great read from one of Bella's favourite writers'

Bella

'Exploring family relationships, which this bestselling author does so well'

Choice



'So much more than an insightful love story. This is Sheila at her best'

Woman's Way

Join Prima's online book club!

Come on bookworms... it's time you signed up for Prima's online book club! You could be one of 75 lucky readers to receive a free book to

review each month and share your thoughts. Next month's book is the fantastic *Pretending to Dance* by Diane Chamberlain. And you'll also get a 40% discount on all Pan Macmillan books. Visit prima.co.uk/bookclub



'Believe in yourself – you never know what could happen!'



We talk to last year's Flirty Fiction winner, Rachel Dove, 35, whose debut novel is published this month

The other morning, I woke up with a jellyfish by my bed. Not the real thing, I hasten to add. I'd written the word on a piece of paper mid-slumber. For many years, I've kept a notebook nearby to write down thoughts that come to me during the night. On this occasion, I had absolutely no idea what "jellyfish" meant, but sometimes my scribbles lead to stories.

Ever since I can remember, I've wanted to be an author. As a child, I'd always be indoors with my nose in a book or writing stories. I devoured, and still devour, every genre in sight.

In my twenties, I began applying for writing competitions. I had a few things published, but never anything major, and I was beginning to give up hope. But last year, the Prima Flirty Fiction competition with Mills & Boon changed all that. I've always enjoyed writing romantic fiction so I thought I'd give it a go.

My husband Peter, 31, had just opened a new sunbed shop next to a dog-grooming parlour, and his business sparked the idea for a romance between two shop owners. When I submitted my entry, I didn't think I stood a chance. I still can't believe my book, *The Chic Boutique On Baker Street*, has become a reality.

The whole process has been a whirlwind, but I've enjoyed every minute. I had 90 days to finish the novel and send it off to Mills & Boon. I'm not usually a speedy writer, but there's nothing like a deadline to quicken the pace! But, working with the publishers' editor made the process a lot less nerve-wracking. She was really supportive, suggesting that I hand in work fortnightly to review as the book progressed, which helped.

I wrote the first draft during the summer holidays, so to add to the challenge, my children – Jayden, seven, and Nathan, six – were at home. Luckily, Peter was great at keeping them occupied while I shut myself away to work.

Now, I have a follow-up novel in the pipeline, and an idea for a third book! Family, friends and colleagues have been really supportive. I've taken a year out from my job as a teacher and, now that I'm free to focus on writing, I've established a routine. I'll take the boys to school and then write in blocks of an

hour or two, often at my desk. But I've scribbled in all kinds of locations – at the beach, on the train, at the doctors!

I couldn't be happier with the direction my life has taken – it just shows what can happen if you believe in yourself!

RACHEL'S TOP TIPS

- **Read everything** It's important to understand what's out there.
- **Keep an eye on trends** The publishing industry goes through phases. It's a good idea to see which genres are popular.
- **Carry a notebook** You never know when inspiration might strike.
- **Don't lose the plot** I find it really helpful to stop writing halfway through a scene. That way, you can pick up the thread of your plot straightaway without daydreaming.
- **Enter competitions** You have to be in it to win it!

MILLS & BOON'S EDITOR SAYS...

'Rachel's warm, enchanting story captured us from the first round of judging, and it's been wonderful working with her to develop her characters further. I'm so excited to get *The Chic Boutique On Baker Street* into readers' hands! Anna Baggageley, commissioning editor

Take 5... Top-notch B&Bs

There's a new wave of bed & breakfasts that defy stereotypes and catapult this much-loved concept into the 21st century

The Coach House, Shropshire

Set in the bucolic conservation village of Norbury, close to walking, cycling and mountain-biking routes, The Coach House dates back 350 years. While it retains its character with log burners and sofas, it also has a boutique-hotel feel with six stylish rooms and a foodie focus (sourdough bread is baked daily – delicious!).

● **BEST FEATURE** Owners Sean and Lexi welcome pooches with dog hampers that contain a water bowl, toys, a ball, dog biscuits, a towel and a freshly baked liver cake!

● **BOOK IT** Doubles from £89 per night, with breakfast. Call 01588 650846 or visit coachhousenorbury.com.

Based in the heart of the village, The Coach House is an ideal base for exploring



Ellenboro House, Lake District



This B&B in the hamlet of Newton-in-Carmel offers the ultimate personal service – there's just one room available! Guests can enjoy a private snug with an open fire, cosy sofa and DVDs.

● **BEST FEATURE** You'll be treated to a hearty breakfast each morning – be it smoked haddock fishcakes or a fry-up. Little extras include a glass of wine and cake on arrival.

● **BOOK IT** Double from £75 per night, with breakfast. Call 01539 530393 or visit ellenborohouse.co.uk.

Westbrook Court near Hay on Wye



Owner and interior designer Kari Morgan has added all the creature comforts to her B&B that she and her husband Chris would love to experience. Five suites have their own sun decks and lounges, all set away from the main farmhouse.

● **BEST FEATURE** In-room spa treatments can be arranged along with extras such as hand-tied flowers or handmade chocolates.

● **BOOK IT** Doubles from £85 per night, with breakfast. Call 01497 831752 or visit westbrookcourtbandb.co.uk.

Studio Farrows, Somerset



This artistic B&B in the Somerset countryside is set in a beautiful garden and orchard. Its interior is a creative escape, with interesting objects and pieces of art in every room, including a Ford Anglia in the living room! There are two double rooms, so it's a great place for two couples.

● **BEST FEATURE** Owners Tracey and Paul host classes with local artists and writers.
● **BOOK IT** The studio (sleeps 4) costs £228 per night, with breakfast. Call 01458 252599 or visit studiofarrows.com.

The Linen Shed, Kent



With vintage interiors and a gypsy caravan in the garden, this arty 1900s house in Boughton-under-Blean is incredibly beautiful. Host Vickie trained as a gourmet chef, so it's no surprise that the food is seriously good – especially the seaside picnic hampers!

● **BEST FEATURE** Catch the train to Faversham and Vickie will try her best to pick you up from the station.
● **BOOK IT** Doubles from £85 per night, with breakfast. Call 01227 752271 or visit thelinenshed.com.

Your holidays

Let's go self-catering!

Enjoy the luxury and freedom of a fabulous villa or house – and our choices are all under £50 per person per night



Sa Fontasa's pool and terrace overlook Mallorca's countryside

Mallorca

From £21 per person per night Sleeps 4

The Balearic Island of Mallorca is prime villa territory for Brits, but often pricey. So Sa Fontasa is a find, with its cottage feel, private pool and awe-inspiring views of Mallorca's rural heartland. The house has been decorated with a lightness of touch and flashes of bright colour to make it fabulously chic. It's ideal for a couple or small family and, although peaceful, it's close to the shops, restaurants and beaches of Pollença and Alcúdia.

BOOK IT Sa Fontasa costs from £600 per week with Simpson Travel. Call 020 8003 6557 or visit simpsontravel.com. EasyJet flies to Palma from £158 return.



Paradiso Sul Mare villa boasts incredible views of Circeo National Park

Italy

From £21 per person per night Sleeps 5

The Gaudi-style Paradiso Sul Mare villa sits right in the heart of the Circeo National Park, in the Lazio region, and is surrounded by beautiful beaches. Designed by modernist architect Michele Busiri-Vici, the villa has been decorated in a Mediterranean style, and has spacious rooms and a private terrace. Here, you'll find stunning views across the Tyrrhenian Sea to the Pontine Islands, and back to the sweep of mountains and coast. There's also a magnificent garden of cactus, cypress, palm, aloe, lemon and olive trees.

BOOK IT Paradiso Sul Mare costs from £750 per week with Cottages to Castles. Call 01622 775217 or visit cottagestocastles.com. EasyJet flies to Fiumicino from £73 return.

Southern Spain

From £22 per person per night **Sleeps 4 or 6**

El Cancho near Tarifa, close to the southernmost tip of Spain, consists of two dynamic beach houses surrounded by rocky outcrops and forest. Wallpaper House has wooden floors, ceilings adorned with woodland prints and sleeps six. Its smaller neighbour, the Boston Beach House, is ideal for a couple but sleeps up to four, and has a glass frontage, which fills it with Spanish sunshine.

BOOK IT Wallpaper House costs from £616 per week; Boston Beach House from £749 per week. Visit i-escape.com/el-cancho. EasyJet flies to Gibraltar from £95 return.



Wallpaper House is surrounded by nature



A fairy-tale four-poster at the Pink House

Barcelona

From £25 per person per night **Sleeps 10**

After a super-cool urban pad on the outskirts of one of Europe's most exciting cities? Prepare to have your socks knocked off by the sheer pizzazz of the Pink House near Barcelona. This stylish city suntrap was previously a photographer's studio and has a fantasy feel with its soft-hued decor, fairy lights, pool, five bedrooms and quirky details such as a pink fridge. Located on the same mountain as Montjuïc, the Pink House is the perfect base for the cable car or to cycle into downtown Barcelona, just 15 minutes away.

BOOK IT From £1,746 per week; visit only-apartments.com. Ryanair offers flights to Barcelona from £62 return.

Scotland

From £25 per person per night **Sleeps 4**

Be prepared to stare. This house in the Highlands has wow factor written all over it. Perched 10 feet from the shores of Loch Beag, The Net Store has lots of windows to make the most of the views across the Minch to the Hebrides and the mountains on the far side of Loch Torridon. Inside, it's all calm, crisp minimalism with Scandi-chic deerskin rugs, leather sofas and wool headboards.

BOOK IT From £700 per week. Call 07747 848576 or visit sawdays.co.uk ➔



Floor-to-ceiling windows make the most of The Net Store's amazing coastal location

Your holidays

Cyprus

From £27 per person per night Sleeps 6

Villa Zoe's X factor is the indoor whirlpool Jacuzzi, which sits in its own circular room. Although thoroughly modern, the villa has the feel of an old Greek manor house, with a beautiful outdoor pool visible from most rooms. It's set in countryside just off the Paphos/Polis road and is only 13km from the picturesque fishing village of Latchi.

BOOK IT Villa Select offers Villa Zoe from £1,112 per week. Call 01789 595435 or visit villaselect.com. EasyJet flies to Paphos from £155 return.



Relax on Villa Viganj's stone terrace

Croatia

From £29 per person per night Sleeps 10

Who wouldn't want to chill out in a renovated 16th-century stone villa with a pool and spectacular sea views on the Peljesac peninsula in Dalmatia? Villa Viganj has five bedrooms, a big, open-plan living room and dining area, a modern kitchen, spacious sea-view stone terrace with barbecue and a garden planted with rosemary and lavender. Best of all is the turquoise pool to laze around or let the kids play in to their hearts' content. There's also windsurfing and scuba-diving facilities nearby, plus plenty of mountain paths and vineyards to explore on foot.

BOOK IT From £2,000 per week; visit i-escape.com/villa-viganj. EasyJet flies to Dubrovnik from £120 return.



Dine alfresco next to Villa Zoe's beautiful outdoor pool



Villa Aria gives a new meaning to 'en suite'
INSET: Enjoy the wow factor in the villa's infinity pool



Turkey

From £36 per person per night Sleeps 11

A perfect property for a group of friends, Villa Aria in Kalkan comes with an en suite swimming pool in the master bedroom, an air-conditioned gym, a spacious sauna and a large hammam. It's set in vast grounds overlooking a wooded valley, with breathtaking views of the Kalkan coastline

beyond. Further highlights include an outdoor infinity pool, a floodlit tennis court, open and shaded dining terraces and a games room.

BOOK IT Vintage Travel offers Villa Aria from £2,750 per week. Call 01954 261431 or visit vintagetravel.co.uk. EasyJet flies to Dalaman from £150 return.



Take a break from the heat on Kalou Cottage's terrace



Greece

**From £38 per person per night
Sleeps 4**

Unique is a family-owned villa specialist with 35 villas across Kefalonia. Kalou Cottage is a gorgeous two-bedroom cottage with spectacular views over Lourdas Bay and within easy walking distance of the beach. Rustic chic is the byword for style here with exposed stonewalls and rattan furniture – there's even a shady terrace and private pool.

BOOK IT Unique Kefalonia offers Kalou Cottage from £1,055 per week. Call 020 7183 5383 or visit uniquekefalonia.com. EasyJet flies to Kefalonia from £95 return.

France

From £40 per person per night Sleeps 6

The spacious, three-bedroom Villa Suzanne near Bordeaux is a stunning family home in the heart of one of France's finest vineyard areas. Inside, it's beautifully cool, calm and contemporary, with a hint of Scandi chic. The living space is open plan, making it ideal for a family or small group. Outside, there's a private pool, beautiful mature gardens with plenty of shady pines, a decked outdoor terrace for alfresco meals, plus flat lawns for kids to charge around. Location adds to the appeal as it's perfect for anyone with a passion for fine food and wines. Nearby, Les Sources de Caudalie is also home to a world-famous spa.

BOOK IT Quality Villas offers Villa Suzanne from £1,695 per week. Call 01442 870055 or visit qualityvillas.com. Ryanair flies to Bordeaux from £43 return.



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Making life simple for the modern woman

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Look good, feel good



Spring Hyacinth and Tulip



Spring Rose & Freesia



Sunkissed Spring

SPRING IS ON ITS WAY!

Catch the mood and send one of these pretty bouquets to family and friends. Whether you're marking a special occasion or simply want to say 'I love you,' your gift is sure to go down well. Choose fragrant 'Spring Hyacinth and Tulip', fresh 'Spring Rose & Freesia' or a burst of sunshine with our 'Sunkissed Spring' bouquet. All three will give you excellent quality flowers and great value for money.

Great news too, as Prima reader, you'll get an exclusive **12% SAVING*** on all orders that you place with us! To claim your discount, please use code **PRIMA0303**.

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Our interpretation of the classic COCO jacket includes the boxy shape but we added some design features of our own. Readers offer: enter code: **READ2016** and receive 10% discount. Available from our online store **www.originalblues.uk** or phone on 020 8813 7766.

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4 PAGES OF GIVEAWAYS AND FABULOUS PUZZLES!

Enter by
phone, text
or post

It's so easy to win!



Super spa getaway

The award-winning Ragdale Hall Health Hydro and Thermal Spa is giving two readers an Overnight Reviver break for two, each worth £492.[†] Set in the Leicestershire countryside, your stay in a Superior room at this luxurious spa will include all meals, a 50-minute Blissful Face and Back Therapy and full use of Ragdale's facilities, such as the multimillion pound Thermal Spa. Visit ragdalehall.co.uk. **Call 0905 789 1009 (80ppm)*. Text PRIMAWIN1 to 87088 (£1.50)**.**

Write to Prima/Ragdale Hall GVPRAL15706. [†]For full T&Cs, see page 160

Fun-filled days out

Drayton Manor Theme Park is giving one reader the chance to win a family pass with an overnight stay at the four-star Drayton Manor Hotel, worth £250.^{††} Five runners-up will also receive a family pass worth £116!^{†††} Based in Staffordshire,



the park is home to Thomas Land, which boasts over 25 attractions, as well as thrill rides, a 4D cinema and a fantastic 15-acre zoo. Visit draytonmanor.co.uk. **Call 0905 789 1011 (80ppm)*. Text PRIMAWIN3 to 87088 (£1.50)**. Write to Prima/Drayton Manor GVPRAL15708.**

For full T&Cs, see page 160

Treats for your pooch

Four readers will win the cosy Grizzly Paw Bear Bed by luxury pet product retailer Scruffs, worth £199.99! This super-plush faux-fur dog bed measures a whopping 130cm in diameter, making it perfect for even the biggest of breeds. The winners will also get a super-absorbent chenille Scruffs Noodle Dry Mat, worth £24.99 – with one of these, your dog's coat will dry quickly after a wet and muddy walk! It's ideal for use in cars, dog crates, on sofas or around the home. Visit petslovescruffs.com.

Call 0905 789 1010 (80ppm)*. Text PRIMAWIN2 to 87088 (£1.50).**

Write to Prima/Scruffs GVPRAL15707.

The Noodle mat measures 90x60cm and comes in burgundy, chocolate or graphite.



Shape up and look great

Summer is around the corner and if you want to tone up before losing the layers, look no further! Thinking Slimmer has 10 Slimpod Gold 12-week programmes, including three brain retraining digital downloads, worth £137, to give away. Created by Harley Street experts, the Slimpod recordings empower you to eat less, move more and make better food

choices. Simply visit thinkingslimmer.com.

Call 0905 789 1012 (80ppm)*. Text PRIMAWIN4 to 87088 (£1.50).**

Write to Prima/Slimpod GVPRAL15709.

Please note: entrants must have internet access and an email account to receive their prize. The prize is also available as a CD.



HOW TO ENTER Call the 0905 number, or text PRIMAWIN followed by the number of the giveaway you wish to enter, then a space and your contact details, to 87088 (£1.50) by midnight, 30 April 2016. For example: text PRIMAWIN1 Jane Smith, 1 The Cottage, London AB1 2CD. Or, send your name and address on a postcard to: The Data Solutions Centre, Worksop S80 2RT, prefixed by the offer name and code, by 3 May 2016. A separate stamped postcard is needed for each offer. *Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge and will last no longer than two minutes. **Texts cost £1.50 plus your usual network operator rate. Lines close midnight, 30 April 2016. If you phone or text your entry after the advertised closing date, you will not be entered but you will be charged. Winners will be selected at random after the closing date. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390. We will use the information you supply to process your competition entry. For our privacy policy, visit hearst.co.uk/dp.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Look after yourself this month



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Puzzles for you to enjoy

Three pages of fun – with cash prizes to win!

**WIN
£50**

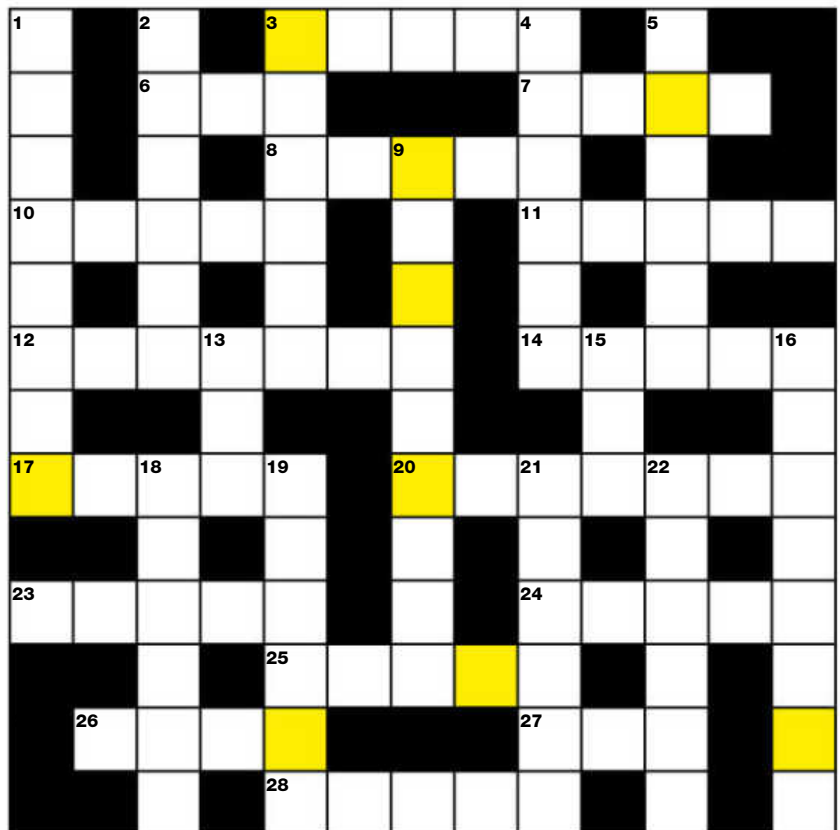
ACROSS

- 3** City where the Arc de Triomphe can be found (5)
6 Diamonds (slang) (3)
7 I fell for it ____, line and sinker, expression (4)
8 Body's trunk (5)
10 Division of an archery target next to the bullseye (5)
11 Edible sea snail (2)
12 The Queen, Prince Charles, Princess Anne, etc (7)
14 ____ *From A Small Island*, British travel book by self-confessed Anglophile Bill Bryson (5)
17 & 25A French Impressionist painter best known for his paintings of ballet dancers (5,5)
20 Town in SW France at the foot of the Pyrenees and place of Roman Catholic pilgrimage (7)
23 Stringed instrument or central character in *Twelfth Night* (5)
24 International radio code for the letter 'I' (5)
25 See 17A
26 Hideous-looking fruit? (4)
27 Bible's first woman (3)
28 The 'E' in reality TV show *TOWIE* (5)

DOWN

- 1** Pure-bred (of an animal) (8)
2 Animated film company named after its founder Walt (6)
3 Car fuel (6)
4 Let's get this ____ the road, saying (4,2)
5 ____ Galbraith, crime-writing pseudonym of J K Rowling (6)
9 Processing 'rubbish' so that it's used again (9)
13 Farmhouse cooker (3)
15 Paddle (3)
16 Strengthens or supports physically or mentally, keeps up the amount of effort (8)
18 Patron saint of England celebrated on 23 April (6)
19 Someone employed to tour with a band to take care of equipment (6)
21 Suitable for both men and women (6)
22 Bumper car (6)

CROSSWORD



17 & 25 ACROSS



22 DOWN



3 ACROSS

Call with your answer on 0906 470 1007*

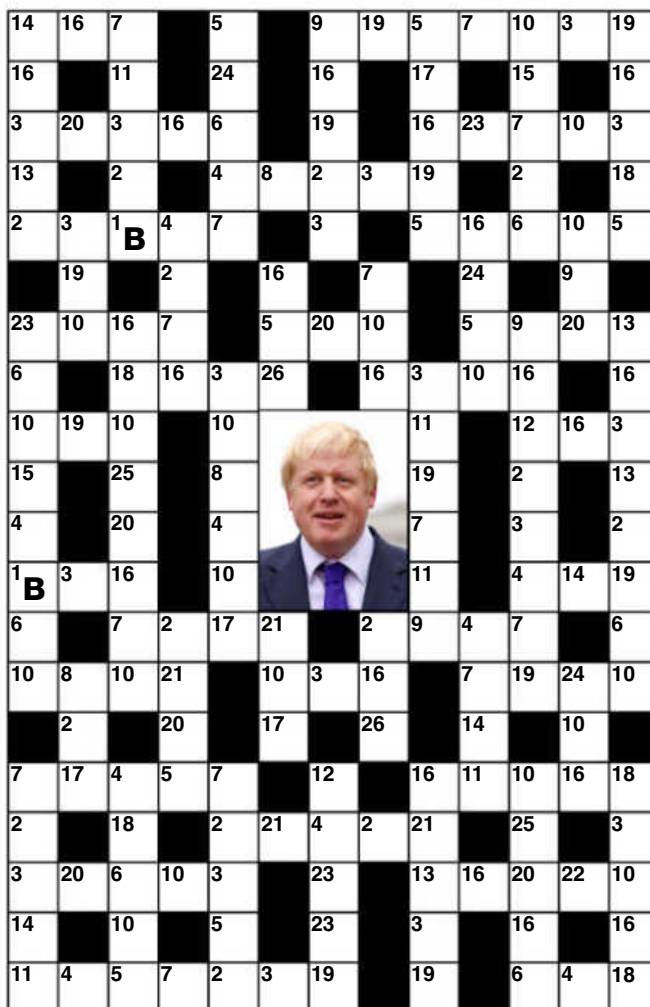
Solve the crossword in the usual way. When completed correctly, the yellow squares, reading top to bottom, left to right, will spell out your prize answer (ceramic material, 9). **Call 0906 470 1007*** and leave your name, address and the answer. All calls cost 65p per minute, plus your telephone company's network access charge, and should last no longer than two minutes. You can also write in – see **HOW TO ENTER** (on the following page). ➔

CODEWORD

WIN
£50

For £100, see if Boris Johnson can help you work out the number code for each letter of the alphabet. We've placed the letter B, now you do the same with the letters O, R, I, S, and on you go. When you're done, use your key grid to find out the prize word. **Call 0906 470 1008*** and leave your name, address and the answer. All calls cost 65p per minute, plus your telephone company's network access charge, and should last no longer than two minutes. You can also write in – see **HOW TO ENTER** (below).

A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
K
L
M
N
O
P
Q
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Z



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
B	O	R	I	S								
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

YOUR KEY GRID:

8	10	6	8	10	7	19

Call with your answer on **0906 470 1008***

HOW TO ENTER

***YOU CAN CALL WITH YOUR ANSWERS** (see numbers with the Win £50 puzzles), leaving your name and address. Or you can write in – send your answer on a postcard with your contact details to: Prima Puzzles, /PUPRAN15981 (for the Crossword), /PUPRAN15982 (for the Codeword) or /PUPRAN15983 (for the Arrow-word), The Data Solutions Centre, Workop S80 2RT. **The closing date is midnight, 30 April 2016 (three working days later for postal entries). If you call to enter after the closing date, you will not be entered but you will be charged.** The competition is open to UK residents only and the usual rules apply.

DATA PROTECTION: We will use the information you supply to process your competition entry. For our privacy policy, visit hearst.co.uk/dp. SP: Spoke, call 0333 202 3390.



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LAST MONTH'S JUST FOR FUN SOLUTIONS

SUDOKU

1	3	7	6	8	9	4	5	2
2	6	4	3	5	1	9	8	7
9	5	8	4	2	7	3	1	6
6	9	1	7	4	2	8	3	5
5	8	2	1	3	6	7	9	4
7	4	3	8	9	5	6	2	1
3	7	5	2	6	8	1	4	9
4	1	9	5	7	3	2	6	8
8	2	6	9	1	4	5	7	3

EASY PEASY

7	6	3	2	9	4	5	1	8
1	4	2	5	6	8	3	9	7
9	8	5	7	1	3	2	6	4
4	3	7	9	2	1	6	8	5
5	2	8	6	3	7	9	4	1
6	9	1	4	8	5	7	3	2
3	7	4	1	5	6	8	2	9
2	1	6	8	7	9	4	5	3
8	5	9	3	4	2	1	7	6

TOUGH STUFF

JANUARY 2016 PRIZE SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD Curiosity

ARROW-WORD Bananas

CODEWORD Squeeze

* Solutions to this month's prize-winning puzzles will be in the July 2016 issue.

ARROW-WORD

Put your feet up and win
£50 at the same time!

WIN
£50

Fill in the grid according to the arrows. When done, the shaded yellow squares will reveal the answer to the following question: **What girl's name did Shakespeare invent to use for a character in *The Merchant Of Venice*? (7)**

Turn into	Stubbs, Sherlock's Mrs Hudson	Farmhouse cooker	Lease, hire	Cokey, party dance	Easy as expression (1,1,1)	Regretted	Impulse	Frosty	US state, capital Honolulu	Islamic country	Ringo, Beatles' drummer
					Popular Italian antipasto						
da Vinci, painter	Years old			Leafy vegetable	Aggressive dog			Sweet potato		Notion, concept	Run quickly, hurry
		Wrath			Sense of self			Strange, peculiar			
Move at a slow trot	Fix your eyes on	Attempt			Lyrical poem			Bullock, US film actress			
		Henpeck	Close-fitting					Elegy, tombstone inscription	Decomposed matter used as fuel	From Bangkok, eg	Winnie-the-Piglet's best friend
Beef, lamb, pork etc	Surpassed, went beyond	Poker stake						Sun umbrella	Speed contest	Liverpudlian (slang)	Freedom
Land, ground	Scrambled breakfast food							Chinese martial art (3,3)			
		Jeans material	Stadium	Terminate - a mission, eg							
Behave like a thespian	Facts and statistics			Grotesque, bizarre	Money (slang)	Stopwatch, eg	Object, thing	Inlet	Terse, brusque	Second Greek letter	
				Beach, popular Aussie bay		Frozen block for your drink (3,4)					
Lop off, cut	Finding, Disney film				Red salad fruit			Computer operator			
				Lift up, elevate		Kenny, radio pioneer					
Start	Grain used in whisky-making				Metallic finish			Serving platter			

Join in and WIN £50

Fill in the answers to the clues and the letters in the 7 shaded squares will spell out your prize answer

Call 0906 470 1009* and leave your name, address and the answer. All calls cost 65p per minute, plus your telephone company's network access charge, and should last no longer than two minutes. You can also write in – see **HOW TO ENTER** (opposite page).

Call with your answer
on **0906 470 1009***

7		1			2	5	3	4
			6	1	3	9	8	7
9	3	8		7	4			
	9			4		7	6	3
	4		7	5	8		2	
1	7	2		6			5	
			8	2		3	4	6
3	2	6	4	9	5			
4	8	7	1			2		5

EASY PEASY

			9	5	2		7	
7	9	4					2	
2				1			8	9
		5	4		8	6		7
		9	3		5	2		
8		7	6		1	9		
9	1			4				3
	6					7	5	2
	7		2	8	6			

TOUGH STUFF

SUDOKU

Place the numbers from 1 to 9 in each empty cell so that each column and each 3 x 3 block contains all the numbers from 1 to 9.

Just for
FUN

Where to buy

A Accessorize

uk.accessorize.com

Amara amara.com

Amazon amazon.co.uk

Appliances Direct
appliancesdirect.co.uk

Asda asda.com

Aussie aussie.com

B Banana Republic

bananarepublic.co.uk

Barker & Stonehouse

barkerandstonehouse.co.uk

Benefit benefitcosmetics.com

Berry Red berryred.co.uk

Betty Barclay bettybarclay.com

Bettys bettys.co.uk

BHS bhs.co.uk

Biscuiteers biscuiteers.com

Boden boden.co.uk

Boots boots.com



C Cambridge Satchel Company

cambridgesatchel.com

Caravan caravanstyle.com

Cath Kidston cathkidston.com

Clarins clarins.co.uk

Clarke & Clarke

clarke-clarke.co.uk

Clarks clarks.co.uk

Clinique clinique.co.uk

Cloth House clothhouse.com

Coast coast-stores.com

Cos cosstores.com/gb

Cox & Cox coxandcox.co.uk

Create and Craft createandcraft.tv

Crown crownpaint.co.uk

Currys currys.co.uk

D Debenhams

debenhams.com

Deichmann deichmann.com

Delilah delilahcosmetics.com

Diva divacatwalk.com

Donna Ida donnaida.com

Dorothy Perkins

dorothyperkins.com

Dotcomgiftshop

dotcomgiftshop.com

Dune dunelondon.com

E Eclectic Eccentricity

eclecticeccentricity.bigcartel.com

Ellie Saab department stores

Elvi elvi.co.uk

Estée Lauder

esteelauder.co.uk

Etsy etsy.com/uk

Evans evans.co.uk

F F&F

clothingattesco.com

Farrow & Ball farrow-ball.com

Feather & Black

featherandblack.com

Feel Unique feelunique.com

Ferm Living fermiliving.com

Fiorelli fiorelli.com

Flying Flowers

flyingflowers.co.uk/prima

Furnish furnish.co.uk

G Gap

gap.co.uk

Garden Trading

gardentrading.co.uk

George direct.asda.com

ghd ghdhair.com

Giorgio Armani

armanibeauty.co.uk

Graham and Green

grahamandgreen.co.uk

Great Plains greatplains.co.uk

H Habitat

habitat.co.uk

H&M hm.com/gb

Harbour Living

harbourliving.co.uk

Hart's of Stur hartsofstur.com



Hema hemashop.com

Hobbs hobbs.co.uk

Holland & Barrett

hollandandbarrett.com

Holly & Lil hollyandlil.co.uk

Hotel Chocolat hotelchocolat.com

House of CB London

houseofcb.com

House of Fraser houseoffraser.co.uk

Houseology houseology.com

Hus & Hem husandhem.co.uk

Hush hush-uk.com

I Ian Mankin

ianmankin.co.uk



iBeani ibeani.co.uk

Ikea ikea.com/gb/en

J Jaeger

jaeger.co.uk

Jane Means janemeans.com

Jigsaw jigsaw-online.com

John Lewis johnlewis.com

Jones Bootmaker

jonesbootmaker.com

Joules joules.com

K KK Studio

kkstudio.london

L Lancôme

lancome.co.uk

Laura Ashley lauraashley.com

Lead The Walk leadthewalk.com

Levi levi.com/GB

Lisa Kay lisakayshoes.com

LK Bennett lkbenett.com

Loaf loaf.com

Long Tall Sally longtallsally.com

Look Fantastic lookfantastic.com

Loop the Loop looptheloop.co.uk

M M&Co

mandco.com

Mango shop.mango.com/GB

Marc Jacobs department stores

Marks & Spencer

marksandspencer.com

Matalan matalan.co.uk

Michael Kors department stores

Miele miele.co.uk

Moda in Pelle

modainpelle.com

N Navabi

navabi.co.uk

New Look newlook.com

Next next.co.uk

Nica nica.co.uk

Nine West ninewest.co.uk

Nkuku nkuku.com

Nordic House

nordichouse.co.uk

NYDJ nydj.co.uk

O Oasis

oasis-stores.com

Oliver Bonas oliverbonas.com

Olli Ella olliella.com

P Paperchase

paperchase.co.uk

Papermash papermash.co.uk

Pashley pashley.co.uk/bikes/

special-editions/country-living.php

Phase Eight phase-eight.com

Poundstretcher

poundstretcher.co.uk

Prestat prestat.co.uk

Primark primark.co.uk

Q QVC

qvcuk.com

R Rigby & Mac

rigbyandmac.com

River Island riverisland.com

Rockett St George

rockettstgeorge.co.uk

Rowen & Wren rowenandwren.co.uk

Rust-Oleum rustoleum.com

S Sack's

sacksfashion.com

Sainsbury's sainsburys.co.uk

Sally sallyexpress.com

Shi Cashmere shicashmere.com

Simply Be simplybe.co.uk

Studio 8 studio-eight.com

Sunglasses Shop

sunglasses-shop.co.uk

Sweetpea & Willow

sweetpeaandwillow.com

T Talking Tables

talkingtables.co.uk

Tateossian tateossian.com

Tesco tesco.com

Thane thanedirect.co.uk

The Oak Room oakroomshop.co.uk

The White Company

thewhitecompany.com

This Works thisworks.co.uk

Timex timex.co.uk

Topshop topshop.com

U Uniqlo

uniqlo.com/uk

United Colors of Benetton

world.benetton.com

V Van Peterson

vanpeterson.com

Very very.co.uk

Villa Nova villanova.co.uk

Vince Camuto vincecamuto.co.uk

Viviscal viviscal.co.uk

W Waitrose

waitrose.com

Wallis wallis.co.uk

Wayfair wayfair.co.uk

Weleda weleda.co.uk

Z Zara

zara.com/uk



Terms & conditions: Ragdale Hall Health Hydro and Thermal Spa "The prize is available to over-16s only. Travel is not included. The prize is valid for six months from the date the winner is notified, subject to availability. Arrival time is 2pm, with departure up to 6pm the following day **Drayton Manor Theme Park** Winners may visit the park on a date of their choosing from 12 March 2016 to 28 October 2016, subject to availability. Selected dates may apply, please check website for opening times and dates. "Hotel stays are subject to availability at time of booking. A family room is a double bed and a sofa bed for up to two children, up to the ages of ten years old. Other room types are available at a supplement. Prize includes breakfast. The prize is non-transferable and no cash alternative is available. The winner of the stay and play package must give Drayton Manor Theme Park four weeks' notice when claiming their prize. "A family pass is for four people, with the maximum of two people aged between 12 to 59 years of age within the family ticket."



Your Stars for April



with
Lori Reid



Aries

21 March – 20 April

From the 5th, Venus boosts your charm, drawing good things your way. Write yourself a 10-point wish list on the 7th and you could soon find yourself embarking on a new path. The 12th links a journey with love. Treat yourself on the 30th – you deserve it.

Taurus

21 April – 20 May

Find time this month to write down your thoughts, goals, frustrations and dreams. Not only is this therapeutic, but it could spark some great ideas – pay particular attention to what comes to mind on the 5th, 7th and 9th. Venus moves into your sign on the 30th and you're in your element.

Gemini

21 May – 21 June

April is a good time to make new friends and connections. It's also a month to think about your ambitions. Until the 19th, mixing business with pleasure enhances your interests and career prospects, and it also paves the way for romantic encounters. Look for a new face on the 22nd.

Cancer

22 June – 23 July

New job, new role, new house? Expect surprising opportunities in April, and be ready to make a few serious decisions. A lull at work allows you to enjoy leisure time. The 19th launches a new social phase, while a special person walks back into your life on the 28th.



Leo

24 July – 23 August

Think big but act quickly to ensure success from the start of April. It's time to experience the wider world. A concentration of planets signals a focus on travel, training and intellectual interests. At work, you're expressing yourself and providing excellent advice.

Virgo

24 August – 23 September

You'll be kept busy during the first half of April, as you'll have plenty of news, people to catch up with and finances to sort. You'll also be buried deep in facts and figures, digging, delving and organising. Home improvements and domestic activities die down after the 17th, giving you a chance to recoup your savings.

Libra

24 September – 22 October

Romance is definitely in the air this month. A commitment is made but, as often happens, you either want to slow things down or change your mind. Do what comes naturally; if you don't seize the day, your opportunity may not come around again. Home life settles down after the 18th.

Scorpio

23 October – 22 November

Impulsive Mars helps you spend money like water throughout the first fortnight. But its influence wanes after the 17th and, with work picking up, you can rebalance your account. A potent full moon on the 22nd ends a chapter – take time out and rest. On the 30th, Venus turns over a wonderful new page.

Sagittarius

23 November – 22 December

This month, the stars bless you with luck and love. Explore your talents through new projects and open your heart to a budding romance – the 9th is your lucky day. Life gets busier in the second half of April, so give yourself a break around the 28th.

Capricorn

23 December – 20 January

With a wealth of stars highlighting your domestic skies this month, home and family are a source of delight. It's a time of discovery: you could find your dream home around the 7th, unearth a treasure on the 9th or learn a secret about a close relative on the 12th.

Aquarius

21 January – 19 February

Social demands increase after the 5th and you're kept on your toes. Much of that whirligig of activity slows down after the middle of the month, giving you a chance to catch up with domestic commitments and home life. You'll be noticed at work on the 22nd.

Pisces

20 February – 20 March

Money matters dominate your affairs, with finances taking an interesting turn. With such promising trends, you can afford to indulge and, if you're clever, snap up a bargain or two during the first few weeks. From the 17th, you'll have the chance to enjoy short trips and some time with friends.

All because the lady loves Milk Tray...



Self-proclaimed chocoholic Caroline Quentin says Easter is an opportunity to throw caution – and calories – to the wind as you embrace the choc fest

treats, and my mum would always have a Bar Six on a Saturday – remember those?

A box of chocolates was a very glamorous thing when I was a girl. “All because the lady loves Milk Tray” was a TV ad with a James Bond-type hunk skiing down avalanches and swimming with sharks – just to get a box of chocs to his girlfriend. Then there was the Black Magic ad, in which a chap secreted diamond earrings in a box of chocolates. A woman’s red-painted nails then caressed the contents of the top layer, hesitated over a strawberry cream, avoided the earrings and, sensibly I think, ended up going for a caramel. You can keep your diamonds, give me a chewy toffee any day!

Then there are the other treats that have stood the test of time. Turkish Delight, so exotic, like a scented stained-glass window; Aero, great texture and a burst of mint or orange; and good ole Fruit & Nut – chocolate AND one of your five-a-day. A Flake is tasty but, for those of us with a large bust, always a risk. The bits of chocolate land on my bosom and melt, leaving speckles, so I look like a chocolaty song thrush.

As it’s Easter, I have to ask: where do you stand on Creme Eggs? Can’t wait for this time of year when

you can once again get stuck into the sweet fondant, or maybe you’ve been affected by the change of recipe scandal? Perhaps you’re planning a Crunchie fest or a Malteser frenzy? Whatever sort of chocolate you prefer, NOW is the time to indulge. Next week we can go back to clean living but, today, let’s throw caution and calories to the wind and stick two chocolaty fingers up at the world. Happy Easter, dear reader – enjoy!

‘You can keep your diamonds, give me a toffee any day!’

We all know that too much sugar is bad for us and, along with the rest of the adult population, I’m trying to cut down. It’s not easy. Christmas is tough but Easter is when I really struggle. It’s the eggs, you see. I love Easter egg chocolate. It’s so thin and fragile and, if kept in the fridge, it SNAPS when you bite into it in such a satisfying way.

I am, generally speaking, a fan of chocolate. I try to enjoy the really grown-up dark stuff, but I’m not naturally sophisticated. When it comes down to it, the milkier it is, the more I like it. I have friends who say things like “Chocolate? I can take it or leave it.” This, in my opinion, is either a lie or the sign of a seriously misspent youth. I’m a child of the 1960s and think I’m the product of the products of my generation. The Milky Bar Kid was my pin-up boy, a Mars a day helped us “Work, Rest and Play” (although I’m not sure the Advertising Standards Authority or GPs would agree these days), a Kit Kat or Wagon Wheels were my after-school

This MONTH...

I’m making



A little Easter bonnet festooned with ribbons and fluffy chicks for my goddaughter’s Easter Parade.

I’m baking



A simnel cake – a fruitcake that’s been made since medieval times.

I’m growing



Carrots, of course! The Easter Bunny needs something to eat...

BRITAIN.
BUILT ON TEA
since 1837



*Rolling in
the hay is
Aussome
Hay-like hair?
No thanks*

Nothing like a roll in the hay, ay?
But hay-like hair?
What a turn off.
So on goes 3 Minute Miracle Moisture and
'wham bam thank you Aussie!' –
you're in moisturised heaven.
So go on, get it on.
And give your thirsty mane
some liquid relief.

#FindYourAussome



There's more to life than hair but it's a good place to start

